

Studies in Śrī Vaiṣṇava Literature



Dr. M. Varadarajan, M.A., Ph.D.

Śrīmatē Rāmānujāya Namaḥ

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FOREWORD

The "Studies in Śrī Vaiṣṇava Literature" is a collection of number of research articles written by the great Scholar Dr.M.Varadarajan. This book contains twelve articles arranged by the author. Following the tradition, composing mangala ślōka, he keeps the article on Brahmōtsava as the first.

While going through, the article 'the doctrine of Bhakti in Vēdārtha Saṅgraha of Śrī Rāmānuja' attracted me where we are able to see the mastery of the subject of the author. He tries to give different kinds of Bhakti taking quotations from Rāmānuja's Vēdārtha Saṅgraha. While concluding the discussion last three sub-heads i.e. Description of Bhakti as an apex form of love, Discussion of the Beatitude of the absolute love, Bhakti as a means to see the Beatific vision of God are quite interesting. He concludes this article with the following words "In this way Śrī Rāmānuja established the doctrine of Bhakti, a form of knowledge which is a means of liberation."

This follows the article on Śaraṇāgati in Śrī Rāmānuja's Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya. In article No.6 the learned author

establishes the antiquity of Śaraṇāgati by taking references from early sources.

In article No.2 he traces the biography of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas from Nathamuni to Desika and Manavalamamuni. Here he deals with life and works of Ācāryas very briefly.

Article No.3, 4 and 5 are about Nammāzvār's Tiruvāymozi. Here the author establishes the Upaniṣadic thoughts of Nammāzvār.

Article No.9 is about contribution of Pēriyavāccān Piḷḷai to commentarial tradition which is interesting. He points out that Pēriyavāccān Piḷḷai is responsible for Ubhaya Vedanta tradition in Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

Other articles in this volume gives overall insight in the Śrī Vaiṣṇava tradition. I congratulate the learned author for presenting different materials on Śrī Vaiṣṇavism in one volume.

K.K.A. Venkatachari

PREFACE

Eversince I learnt the Śrī Vaiṣṇava commentaries from my Acharya Sri U.Ve.T.A.Krishnamacharya Swami, I was very much imbued in the literary beauties and philosophical thoughts of Ālvārs and Ācāryās. Constant studying of those commentaries enabled me to present papers at various Conferences and Seminars for over a decade.

This book, "STUDIES IN ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVA LITERATURE" is the compendium of 12 research papers dealing with Lord Śrīnivāsa, Nammalvār, Śrī Rāmānuja, Tirumala Anantālvān, Pēriyavāccān Pillai, Vādikēśari Alagiya Maṇavāla Jīyar and Prativādi Bayankaram Aṇṇa in sequence..

I was greatly benefitted by various texts of several authors in bringing out this book. I am extremely beholden to my esteemed Acharya Sri U.Ve.T.A.Krishnamacharya Swami for his blessings and encouragement in studying ancient texts.

An ardent devotee of Lord Śrīnivāsa and Bhagavatas, Sri U.Ve. N.S.Raghavan Swami of Chennai, voluntarily came forward to contribute financially in bringing out this book in an elegant manner. I sincerely thank him for this generous gesture. I am grateful to Sri U.Ve. Prof. K.K.A. Venkatachari, Founder Director & Professor (Retd.), Anantharcharya Indological Research Institute, Mumbai, for giving a valuable Foreword which added luster to the book.

I express my gratitude to Sri V.Raghavendra Rao, SVUORI, Tirupati, who guided me to publish the book in diacritical format. I also thank Dr.C.Umakantham, Associate Professor in Philosophy, S.V.University, who helped me in bringing out this book at the earliest possible time. I bless my son Chi.M.Ananth, B.Tech. who was helpful in going through the draft and offered suggestions.

I also thank Mr. G. Sridhar and Mr.Chandra of University Xerox,Tirupati, who were constantly engaged in publishing this book so nicely.

16 August 2002

(M. Varadarajan)



THE SPLENDOUR THAT IS TIRUMALA BRAHMŌTSAVAM

Tirumala is the second Divya Dēśa among the 108 Divya Dēśās, sung by ten out of twelve Āzvārs. There is no place equalling the Vēṅkaṭa Hill anywhere in this world and there is no God equal to Lord Śrīnivāsa at any time - past, present or future. There is no mention either in Purāṇās or in Āzvārs' hymns about the nomenclature 'Seven Hills'. But Tirumala is called Seven Hills as there is a story behind this name in Yajur Vēda Samhitā (6.2.4). It is said that when there was a conflict between Viṣṇu and Indra, Viṣṇu in the form of Varāha dropped the Yajña materials on the earth in the form of Seven Hilllocks. These Seven Hills form a chain and the Lord rules over these Seven Hills. Hence it is called Seven Hills.

The 18th Chapter of Padma Purāṇa says that during the first Kṛtayuga in this Bharata Dēśa, at Nārāyaṇagiri, which is situated about 200 Yōjana (a Yōjana is equal to 9 miles) on the South of Ganges and 5 Yōjanās on the West of Bay of Bengal, at the request of Dēvās, Lord Śrīnivāsa resided on the Puraṭṭāsi Śravaṇa Star in the South West of Svāmi Puṣkarīṇi. Since then, He was granting the wishes of all devotees who come up to Him.

It is said in the 18th Chapter of Bhaviṣyōttara Purāṇa that Lord Śrīnivāsa instructed Brahma to perform Utsavam by erecting Dvaja on the first day and end with Rathōtsava, including several Vāhanās for nine days. In turn, Brahma advised the ruler of Tirumala, Tōṇḍamān Cakravarti to perform the Brahmōtsavam. Brahma called Viśvakarma to help the King. The King ordered him to prepare umbrella, Cāmaram, Ālavaṭṭam, Vāhanās and Charlot. Then, as per the benign order, he invited the people from different castes - Brahmins, Kings, Merchants, Agriculturists from Anga, Vanga and Kalinga Dēśās. At that time, Brahma in the presence of Rīṣīs and Kings, performed Aṅkurārpaṇa on the penultimate day of Brahmōtsavam. On the next day, Brahmōtsavam started with Dvajārōhaṇam and ended with Cakrasnānam and Puṣpayāga.

During these nine days, the Vāhanās were held as follows:

On the first day, Dvajārōhaṇam, the Lord was presided in the Pallanquin; night - Pedda Śēṣa Vāhana; 2nd day morning Chinna Śēṣa Vahana, night Hamsa; 3rd day morning Simha, night Pearl Maṇṭapam; 4th day Kalpaka Vṛkṣa, night Sarvabhūpala Vāhana; 5th day Pallanquin with Mōhini Avatāram; night Garuḍa Vāhana; 6th day

morning Hanumanta Vāhana, after Vasanta Utsavam In Maṅgaḷagiri, night Gaja Vāhana.; 7th day Sūryaprabha, night Candraprabha after Tōṭa Utsava In Maṅgaḷagiri 8th day Charlot, night Aśva Vāhanā; 9th day early morning Pallanquin; on the Avatāra day of Lord i.e. Puraṭṭāsi Śravaṇā-morning Cakrasnānam. Then procession in four mada streets In Maṅgaḷagiri. The Cakrasnānam In Svāmi Puṣkarīṇi and In the night Dvaja Avarōhana Utsava. On the 10th day Puṣpayāga, Tirumala being Puṣpa Maṇṭapam. It is said that after performing Brahmōtsavam, Brahmā reached Satyalōkā at the behest of Lord Śrīnivāsa. Like wise Tōṇḍamān Cakravarti returned to his palace with the blessings of Lord.

This practice of conducting Brahmōtsavam every year was held and there is a mention about Brahmōtsavam In Śrī Vēṅkatācala Itihāsa Mālā, a treatise written by Ācārya Tirumala Anantārya. It is said as follows: Tirumala was considered holiest and further rough with rocks and forests. There was no township around the temple. It is said that a devotee named Trumaguḍāran with great difficulty cleared the area beside the outerwalls of the temple and laid narrow roads, providing houses for temple servants. It was not convenient to celebrate

Brahmōtsavam of Lord Śrīnivāsa on the Hills. So they used to carry the deity after Dvajārōhaṇam on the first day of Brahmōtsavam to Tiruccanūr, to perform Brahmōtsavam for eight days in a grand manner and bring back the deity to Tirumala after the Cakrasnānam in Tiruccanūr Temple Tank - Padmasarōvar and then perform the Dvaja Avarōhaṇam and Puṣpayāgam at Tirumala on the 9th day night and 10th day respectively.

It was Śrī Rāmānuja, who wished to continue the practice of performing the Brahmōtsavam of Malayappa Svāmi over the Hills itself as was conducted by Tōṇaḍamān Cakravartī. So, by his sheer intelligence and devotion, he planned and laid four broad streets around the temple and celebrated the yearly Brahmōtsavam with pomp and deity at Tirumala itself.

Since ten out of twelve Āzvārs sung about Śrīnivāsa, Śrī Rāmānuja arranged the rendering of Nālāyira Divya Prabandham during Brahmōtsavam by Pedda Jīyar and Adyāpāka Śrīvaiṣṇavās on both times starting from Mudal Āzvārs Prabandham as these hymns reveal their bhakti on Śrīnivāsa.

Recitation of Divya Prabandham will begin only on the first day evening Vāhana when Malayappa Svāmi with His Consorts blesses the devotees from

Pedda Śēṣa Vāhana. Mudal Tiruvandāḍi of Pōygal Āḻvār, who sung 10 hymns about Lord Śrīnivāsa and Tirumala will be recited. Śēṣa Vāhana also reminds Āḍiśēṣā's nine type of kalinkarya as a Nityasūri to Lord as told by Poygal Āḻvār in his Prabandham. When Lord is in sitting posture, Adishesha will be the Simhasana. Hence Sesha Vahana.

On the second day morning the procession is on the Chinna Śēṣa Vāhana. It is significant that Malayappa Svāmi appears on Chinna Śēṣa Vāhana only to show respect and esteem for the image of Lord Ranganātha as He was brought to Tirumala for safety concerns during the invasion of Muslims, in the 14th century. That night, the deity is convoyed on Hamsa Vāhana. It is believed that one's sins will be cleared off by worshipping Lord in Hamsa Vāhana. It also reminds a hymn of Tirumangal Āḻvār who said that Malayappa Svāmi did Hamsāvatārā to uplift the Vēdās from the ocean. On both occasions, Bhuthath Āḻvār's Irandam Tiruvandāḍi will be recited. In this Prabandham there are 11 hymns pertaining to Lord Śrīnivāsa and Tirumala.

On the third day, Pēyāḷvār's Mūnṛām Tiruvandāḍi will be recited on both sessions. In the morning, the Lord will appear in Simha Vāhana. In

the evening, the pavillon is decorated with strings of pearls from the Pearls Maṇḍapam (Muttupandal) in which the deity blesses the devotees.

On the fourth day morning Malayappa Svāmi, being Karpaka Himself - which means whatever one wishes that is accomplished as spoken by Nammāṣvār in Tiruvāymoḡi - will appear in Karpakavṛkṣa Vāhana - a Tree of Bliss and bless the devotees. On the same night, He graces with His Consorts on the Sarvabhūpala Vāhana. On both sessions, Tirumazhisai Āṣvār's Nanmugan Tiruvandādi will be recited.

On the fifth day morning Lord's Mōhini Avatāra in Pallanquin reminds His help to Devas by appearing as Mōhini after Amṛtamadanam in the Milky ocean. Tiruvruttam of Nammāṣvār will be recited in the procession, as most of the hymns in Tiruvruttam are in Nāyikābhāva, which means Parāṅkuśa Nāyaki's longing for the union with the Lord. On the same day evening, Lord will appear in Garuḍa Vāhanā, adorned with ornaments like precious sacred jewel Lakṣmīhāra and Makarkanti, the inseparable jewels of Mūlavirāṭ, on this Vāhana only. It is believed that the entire svarūpa of Mūlavirāṭ is in Utsava Murti in this particular Vāhana. Actually in those days the main sanctum sanctorum

used to be closed till Malayappa Svāmi comes inside after Garuḍa Vāhana.

On the sixth day morning Malayappa Svāmi comes out in Hanumanta Vāhana. In the afternoon, Vasantha Utsavam will be held at Vasantha Mandapam where Tirumanjanam is performed to Lord with His Consorts and then, clad in pure silk bordered white vastram, bless the devotees, which reminds the suddhasatvam. After Vasantha Utsavam, the Lord graces the Gaja Vāhanā. On both occasions, Nammāzvār's Periya Tiruvandādi will be rendered by Pedda Jīyar and Śrīvaṣṇavās. During these six days, Periyāzvār Tirumozī will be recited, besides other Prabandhams and gets completed on the sixth day night.

On the seventh day, the Lord, as a presiding deity will be seated in Sūrya and Candra Prabha Vāhanās, in the morning and evening respectively. Sūrya Prabha reminds that the Lord resides in the orbit of Sūrya as stated in Vēdās. Sūrya Prabha is the grandest of all in South India, particularly the vision of Lord, who adorns Vajra Kavacam and Krīṭa in Sūrya Prabha captures everyone to surrender before Him. Tirumangalāzvār's Periya Tirumozī will be recited on both sessions.

On the eighth day, Rathōtsavam is an important festival during Brahmōtsavam. Śrī Malayappa Svāmi with His Consorts will be seated in the beautifully decorated chariot in the early hours of the eighth day and at the appointed Muhūrtham the chariot will be dragged all through the Māḍā streets. The remaining hymns in Periya Tirumozī will be recited by Jīyars and Śrīvaiṣṇava Adyāpākās; Sāttumūal will be held in front of the chariot after it reaches the original place. On the same night when the procession is on Aśva Vāhana, Āṇḍāl's Natchiyar Tirumozī will be recited.

On the Dvaja Avarōhaṇam day - the ninth day morning Cakrasnānam will be held in Varāha Svāmi Puṣkarīṇi when the Utsava Murti graces on the bank of that Puṣkarīṇi. Earlier, other hymns from Mudalāyiram will be recited in the Vīdi Utsavam.

In the Dvaja Avarōhaṇam procession, Śrī Rāmānuja Nūṭṭrandādi will be recited. It reminds the conclusion of Brahmōtsavam which was arranged by Śrī Rāmānuja. Tiruvāymozī of Nammāzvār will be recited on the Dvādaśa Ārādanam Day.

In this way, the Brahmōtsavam of Śrī Malayappa Svāmi, with the recitation of Nālāyira Divya Prabandam so beautifully arranged by Śrī Rāmānuja, is still being performed by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams with pomp and getly.

THE ĀCĀRYĀS OF ŚRĪVAIṢṆAVISM

The first millennium of the Christian Era was a landmark in the religious history of India. It was during the 6th and 8th centuries, that great saints like the Āzvārs sowed the seed of bhakti among the masses through their hymns on Viṣṇu called 'Drāviḍa Vēdā - Nālayira Divya Prabandham'. Then there was a lull for over hundred years. The second millennium was no less significant than the first, as several Ācāryās emerged and played important roles in unearthing the lore of Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Since the advent of Śrīman Nāthamunigal, born in Kāṭṭumannārkōyil in 823 A.D., there has been a resurgence of Vaiṣṇavism with the rediscovery of 'Nālayira Divya Prabandham'. At the far end of the first millennium, the seed sown by the Āzvārs, nurtured by Śrīman Nāthamunigal, began to sprout with the emergence of the greatest Ācārya Yāmunācārya. Yāmunācārya (976-1042 A.D.), Nāthamunigal's grandson, was a disciple of Rāma Misra, who transformed his mundane life into a spiritual one. Yāmunācārya, an indefatigable leader of Śrīvaiṣṇavism, refuted the tenets of other schools through his eight Sanskrit works -- 'Ātma Siddhi', 'Īśvara Siddhi', 'Saṃvit Siddhi', 'Gītārtha

Saṅgrahaṃ', 'Āgamaprāmāṇyaṃ', 'Catuslōkī', 'Stōtraratanṃ' and 'Mahāpuruṣanirṇayaṃ'.

Śrī Rāmānuja (1017-1137), born in Śrī Pērumbūdūr fulfilled Yāmunā's desires by his works - 'Vēdārtha Saṅgraha', Śrī Bhāṣya, 'Vēdānta Dīpam', Gītā Bhāṣya, 'Gadhya Trayam' and 'Nitya Grantha'. Śrī Rāmānuja regularised the temple rituals at Śrīraṅgaṃ, Tirumalai and Melkote.

Kūrēśa (1009-1127), born in Kūraṃ, near Kanchi, helped Śrī Rāmānuja in writing 'Śrī Bhāṣya'. Kūrēśa, along with Periya Nambī, visited Chola palace in order to safeguard Śrīvaiṣṇavism. His work 'Pañcastava' (Valkuṇṭastava, Atimānuṣastava, Varadarājastava, Sundarabhāhustava, Śrīstava) is a masterpiece of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

Dasarathi (1027-1132), otherwise called Mudaliyandan, born near Poonamallee and a disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja, did yeomen service for the furtherance of Śrīvaiṣṇavism.

Ēmbār (1021-1140), born in Maduramangalam near Kanchi, was a nephew of Tirumala Nambī. Ēmbār's knowledge of Iyāl, Isai, Natakam of Tamil Prabandams was superb and he had unshakable faith in Rāmānuja.

Eṅkaḷ Āzvāṇ (1097-1197), otherwise called Viṣṇu Citta, a disciple of Rāmānuja wrote a

commentary on Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇā called Viṣṇu Cittīyam, which is very popular among the scholars. His other works are Pramēya Sangraha and Sangati Mālā, which are not available now.

Tirumalal Aṇantāzvāṇ, born in Siruputtur, Karnataka, in 1056, was an ardent disciple of Rāmānuja. He came to Tirumalal to do Puṣpa Kainkarya to Lord Śrīnivāsa. He wrote two poems - 'Rāmānuja Catuslōkī' and 'Goda Catuslōkī'.

Aruḷalapperumāl Emperumāṇār (12th Century), a native of Karnataka and the chief of Advaitins, became Śrī Rāmānujā's disciple and wrote two treatises - 'Jñānasāram' and 'Pramēyasāram'.

Kūranārāyaṇa Jīyar (12th Century) was a disciple of both Kūrēśa and his son Parāśara Bhaṭṭar. A staunch devotee of Cakrattāzvāṇ, he composed Śatakam on Cakrattāzvāṇ called 'Sudarśana Śatakam' which helps the devotees atone for their sins.

Kṛdāmbi Āccān (12th Century), another disciple of Rāmānuja, was a scholar in Vēdānta. Naḍādūr Ālvān (12th century), otherwise called Varada Viṣṇu, was the son of the younger sister of Rāmānuja. A staunch Śrī Vaiṣṇava, he was one among the 74 Sīṃhāsanaṭipatīs, chaired for 'Śrī Bhāṣya'.

Sudarśana Bhaṭṭar (12th Century) was a disciple of Naḍādūr Ammāl. He wrote an extensive commentary on Śrī Bhāṣya called 'Śrutaprakāśika' and another work called 'Śrutapradīpika'. These are the source books for the scholars to understand 'Śrī Bhāṣya'.

Tiruvaraṇagattamudanār (12th Century), a native of Śrīraṇagam, was in charge of the Śrīraṇagam temple. He composed 108 hymns on Rāmānuja, called 'Rāmānuja Nūṛṇḍādī', a treatise equal to Gāyatrī Mantra for meditation. He was a disciple of Kūrēśa.

Tirukkurukalppirāṇ Pillān born in Kurukal, Tirunelveli, in 1066, to Periya Tirumalai Nambī, was entrusted to take care of Rāmānuja and he became the Jñānaputra of Rāmānuja. At the instance of Rāmānuja, he first wrote a commentary for Tiruvāymoḻi known as 'Arayirappadī'. It is considered equivalent to 'Śrī Viṣṇupurāṇa'.

Parāśara Bhaṭṭar (1122-1174) was the eldest son of Kūrēśa. A contemporary of Pillān, Bhaṭṭar wrote a brief commentary on Tirumangal Āzvār's Tiruneṭuntāṇṭakam. He is considered to be one of the greatest Ācāryās. He wrote a lucid commentary on Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāma called 'Bhagavat Guṇa Darpaṇa'. He also composed

Sanskrit songs in praise of Goddess Lakṣmī, 'Śrīguṇaratnakōśa'. His work on Rahasya titled 'Aṣṭaślōki' is a treasure for Śrī Vaiṣṇavās. Another work on Lord Raṅganātha, called 'Śrīraṅgarājastavam', is a masterpiece. His interpretations on Āzvārs' hymns were alluring and inspiring.

Nañciyar (1113-1208) became an ardent disciple of Parāśara Bhaṭṭar. He wrote a Maṇipravāḷa commentary on Tiruvāymoḡi called Ōnpadināirappaḍi and held several discourses on them.

Nampiḷḷai (1147-1252), otherwise called Varadarāja, was born in Nambūr and is the greatest commentator on Tiruvāymoḡi called 'Īṭu', which is still famous to this day. He was a disciple of Nañciyar.

Vaḍakkuttiruvīdippḷḷai (1167-1264), also known as Kṛṣṇapāda, is known for his erudition that was illuminated in his Tiruvāymoḡi commentary.

Kṛṣṇasūri (1167-1262), also called Periyavāccāṇṇṇḷḷai, was a disciple of Nampiḷḷai. He wrote a lucid commentary on Tiruvāymoḡi, similar to the Ślōkās of Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam. His mastery over the Maṇipravāḷa commentaries for Nāḷāyira Divya Prabandham enabled him to adorn the four

thrones of learning - Prabandhaṃs, Rahasyams, Tanśīlōkī and Stōstrās - and win the coveted title 'Vyākyaṇa Cakravartī' (The King of Commentators).

Vādikēśari Alagiyā Maṇavāla Jīyar (1242-1350) born in Brahmadēśam Mannarkoll, wrote a commentary on Tiruvāymozi called Pannīrāyirappaḍi. His incisive writings on Ubhaya Vēdānta through his works in Maṇipravāḷa language like 'Dīpaprakāśa', 'Dīpa Saṅgraha', 'Tatva Bhūṣaṇa' and Tamil works like 'Bhārata Vēṇbha' are testimony to his versatility.

Pillai Lōkācārya (1205-1311), a native of Śrīrangam and a son of Kṛṣṇapāda, was a star in the galaxy of Śrī Vaiṣṇava doctrine of the 13th Century. He wrote 18 treatises or secrets known as 'Aṣṭādaśarahasyam'.

Azakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷ Nāyaṇār, (1207-1309), another son of Kṛṣṇapāda, wrote a monumental work called 'Ācārya Hṛdayam', a text which speaks about Nammālvār and his hymns. Another work, 'Aruḷcceyal Rahasyam' a masterpiece, throws light on the tenets of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Apart from these, he wrote commentaries on Prabandhaṃs like 'Amalanāḍipirān', Kaṇṇinūciṟuttāmbu' and 'Tiruppāval Āṟāyirappaḍi'.

Vēdānta Dēśika (1269-1369) born in Tūppul, near Kāñci, revived Śrī Vaiṣṇavism by writing several works in Sanskrit. A prolific writer, his commentary for 'Śrī Bhāṣyam' called 'Adikaraṇasārāvāḷi', 'Tātparya Candrika' for 'Gīta Bhāṣyam', 'Tatva Tīka', 'Nyāyasiddhāntam', 'Pādukāsahasram', 'Dayā Śatakam', 'Śatadūṣaṇam', 'Munivāhana Bhōgam' and several works are famous even now. Śaumyavarēśvara (Nayanārāccānpillai) (1227-1327) was an adopted son of Kṛṣṇasūri. His Maṇipravāḷa commentary on Yāmunā's 'Catuślōkī' is still enlivening the scholars. He established in his work 'Caramōpāya Nirṇayam' that Rāmānujā is the only Ācāryā who can sanction salvation for devotees.

Jananyācārya (13th Century) a native of Mēlkōṭe was doing Puṣpa Kalinkarya to Lord Tirunārāyaṇa of Mēlkōṭe. He was a disciple of Dēvarāja who first taught Nampillai's 'Ītu' to his disciples including Jananyācārya. He also wrote two commentaries on Tiruppāval called 'Nālāyirappadi' and 'Īrāyirappadi', besides commentary for Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam.

Śrīśailanāthar (1290-1410), otherwise called Tiruvāymoḻppillai, was a disciple of Kūrakulōttamadāśa, a disciple of Pillai Lōkācārya.

He learnt Bhagavat Viṣayaṃ from Dēvarāja. His contribution to Śrī Vaiṣṇavism is immense. He wrote a commentary on 'Periyāzvār Tirumozī', which is not available now. He established a temple for Rāmānuja in Āzvār Tirunagarī in recognition of his service to Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

Maṇavāḷamāmuniḡa! (1370-1443), otherwise called Varavara Muni, was the last Pūrvācārya in this realm, who propagated Śrī Vaiṣṇavism through his gentleness. He was a disciple of Śrīcailanātar. His commentary on Azakiyamaṇavāḷapperumā! Nāyaṇār's Ācārya Hṛdayaṃ has acclaimed fame. His other works are 'Tiruvāymozi Nūrrandādi', 'Upadēśaratnamāla', 'Yatirājavimsati and so on. Of his disciples, Prativādi Bhayankaraṃ Aṇṇan composed four Stōstrās - 'Śrī Vēnkaṭēśa Suprabhātam', 'Prapatti', 'Stōstrās' and 'Mangaḷaṃ, which are even now recited in Tirumala. Dēvarāja Guru, another disciple wrote several works on Maṇavāḷamāmuniḡa!, while Appḷḷai wrote commentaries on 'Iyarpā' of Mudal Āzvārs and others. Pḷḷallōkam Jīyar, (16th Century), a descendant of Paravastu Paṭṭarprānjīyar, wrote commentaries on 'Rāmānujanūrrandādi', 'Upadēśaratnamāla, Tiruvāymozi Nūrrandādi', 'Tanlyans of Nālāyiram' and for 'Rahasya Grantas'.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF NAMMĀZVĀR TO INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Vēdās are the source for the six systems of Indian Philosophy. In India, Philosophy is a means to attain the ultimate goal of life. The goal of life varies from man to man. For some it consists in attaining wealth, for some others it consists in attaining power. Some believe that it is freedom from the cycle of births. It is the same as liberation (Mōkṣa)- negatively a state of freedom from pain and positively happiness. The systems of Indian Philosophy viz. Nyaya, Vaishesika, Samkhya, Yōga, Mimamsa and Vēdānta rooted in Vedic tradition aim at this ultimate goal viz. Mōkṣa.

Vēdānta, otherwise called Upaniṣads, stand for the final portion of the Vēdās. It is said that the teachings of the Vēda in their essence are presented in Upaniṣads. Broadly the Schools of Vēdānta may be classified as either Absolutistic or Theistic - the former representing Brahman, the ultimate reality as an Impersonal principle and the latter as a personal God.¹

The Upaniṣadic teachings centre round the three tenets i.e. cit (sentient beings), acit (non-sentient beings) and Īśvara (God). While understanding these Upaniṣadic tenets, lot of variations cropped out. Accordingly a number of

schools Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, Suddādvaita, Bēdābēdavāda - arose in respect of their teachings.

P.N. Śrīnivāsāchari explains Vēdānta as Darśana, an enquiry into the meaning of Brahman. A Darśana is a body of eternal and impersonal spiritual truths enshrined in Sruti which can be logically tasted and verified by personal experience. The Vēdānta Darśana affords insight into the nature of Brahman, and the ultimate proof of the existence of Brahman in the experience of Brahman.²

Vēdānta Darśana has a hoary past - a long tradition starting from Bhagavat Bōdāyana, Tanka, Dramiḍācārya, Guhadēva and Bharuci before Christian era. Śrī Rāmānuja also quotes this in his text Vēdārtha Sangraha.³

The contribution of Nammāzṅvār to the development of Vēdānta are profound and significant. It was in the beginning of this Kaliyuga, Nammāzṅvār revealed the doctrines of Vēdānta in his monumental work, Tiruvāymozi, known as Dravida Vēda, in chaste Tamil. Vēdānta Dēśika also rightly points out in his Sankalpa Sūryōdaya that next to Brahma Nandi and others, Nammāzṅvār was the propagator of Vēdānta doctrines in the

beginning of Kaliyuga. P.N.Śrīnivāsacarī also supplements that the tradition of Vāsudēva, Śvētakētu, Bōdāyana, Prahlāda and Nammāzvār is continued through the ages in spite of historic irrelevances.⁴

Since the birth of Nammāzvār and till the advent of Ācārya Śrīman Nāthamunigal in the middle of the 9th century, there was a lull in propagating Vēdic doctrines that were transmitted into Tamil hymns by Āzvārs, particularly Nammāzvār. This resulted more or less in the decay of the system which was rightly transmitted by Nammāzvār from the lineage of Vyāsa, Ṭaṅka and so on. It was during the 9th century that Śrīman Nāthamunigal, through his realisation of the doctrines of Nammāzvār rediscovered the hymns of all Āzvārs which later came to be known as Rāmānuja Darśana or Viṣṣṭādvaita.

Hence, It is important to know about Nammāzvār's contribution to Indian Philosophy. The philosophy of Nammāzvār is close to Vēdānta. Nammāzvār was blessed by Śrīman Nārāyaṇa by giving 'bhakti rūpāpanna jñāna' - vouchsafed wisdom love for condensing the philosophy of Vēdās into soothing Tamil - Drāviḍa Vēda. So, Nammāzvār's contribution to Indian Philosophy is really worth

pondering over. Nammāzvār's Tiruvāymoḻi is magnum opus. The philosophies of Vēdānta are concealed as a hidden treasure of Tiruvāymoḻi. Śrīman Nāthamuniḡal in his opening Sanskrit version of Tiruvāymoḻi hailed it as 'the ocean of Tamil Vēdā in which the Upaniṣads of the thousand branches flow together.'⁵

Nammāzvār emphasises in Tiruvāymoḻi, the Tatva (nature of Brahman), Hita (nature of means) and Puruṣārtha (nature of goal). The esoteric meaning of Vēdās are conveyed in chaste Tamil. It was only during the period of Śrī Rāmānuja, in the 11th century, the philosophy of Nammāzvār was unearthed through his nine works.⁶ He also influenced his disciple Tirukkurukalpiran Pillan who wrote commentary for Tiruvāymoḻi. Following him, Nañciyar, Vaḍakkuttiruvīdippillal, Pēriyavāccān Pillal, and Vādkēṣari Aḷagiyamaṇavāḷa Jīyar wrote commentaries on Tiruvāymoḻi which also brings out the Vēdic truths. It is said that Śrī Rāmānuja wrote commentary for Brahma Sūtra, called Śrī Bhāṣya, in the light of Nammāzvār's Tiruvāymoḻi.⁷ Further, Vēdānta Desika also states in his text Dramiḍōpaniṣaḍ Tātparya Ratnāvali that the first 21 hymns in Tiruvāymoḻi explains the meanings of Brahmā Sūtra. This can be compared with that of

the Ṛgveda which has 21 branches, the thousand hymns of Tiruvāymoḻi is like 1000 branches of Sāmaveda ; the thousand hymns of Tiruvāymoḻi is classified into 100 decads each comprising 11 hymns is equal to 10 branches of Yajur Vēda; Tiruvāymoḻi eulogises śānta Rasa which is supplemented with other eight rasas. Thus Tiruvāymoḻi has the status of equality with that of Vēdās and essence of Upaniṣads.⁸

The philosophy of Nammāḻvār as described in Vēdānta is a persistent enquiry into the nature of Brahman in its three fold aspects of cit, acit and Īśvara. Among these, the nature of Brahman (Īśvara) is well elicited by Nammāḻvār as hidden in Upaniṣads. In several hymns of Tiruvāymoḻi, Nammāḻvār asserts the following themes: Brahman is the three fold cause for the Universe; Brahman is the cause of deliverance of Vēdās to Brahma; sentient and non-sentient beings are subservient to Brahman; Brahman is a means for liberation (Mōkṣa); Brahman is Antaryāmi; His par excellence beauty; His immeasurable attributes like the Infinite, tasteful of God; God is light of all knowledge that illumine; supremacy over all other Gods; simplicity and repository of super excellent traits like joyfulness (Ānandamaya); His relationship with cit and acit

(Śarīra Śarīri Bhāva) and so on. Of the various aspects mentioned above, I wish to concentrate on the following three: 1. Brahman as the cause of deliverance of Vēdās to Brahma; 2. Sentient and non-sentient beings as subservient to Brahman; 3. Brahman as a means for liberation (Mōkṣa).

1.1 Brahman as the cause of deliverance of Vēdās to Brahma:

As Brahman is cause of the Universe, He has created Brahma and delivered Vēdās to Him first. The scriptural passage in Śvētāśvatarōpaniṣad is 'Yō brahmāṇaṃ vidadhāti pūrvaṃ yō vai vēdāṃścaphiṇōti tasmai *', which means 'He who first creates Brahma and delivers the Vēdās to Him'. While narrating the activities of Brahma and Śiva who are head of Vyāṣṭi Śṛṣṭi (discrete aspect of the world) and Saṃhāra (destruction) respectively, Nammāzvēar says, '.....Amararkkum Ariviyantu'¹⁰ which means that Brahman is the propagator of knowledge to the devas through Brahma. Nampiḷḷal explaining the word 'amararkkum ariviyantu' says that Brahman is the cause for getting fame to Brahma who propagated Vēdās to Dēvās. Here 'He is the cause' means that the Brahman, as inner ruler (Antaryāmi) in Brahma, delivered Vēdās who in turn propagated them to

Dēvās.¹¹ In this way, there are number of hymns in Tiruvāymoḡi explaining this aspect.¹² Having known that Brahman has created Brahma first who in turn creates all, it is at length discussed in Vēdāntā that both cit and acit are subservient to Brahman, who is inner ruler in every creature. This will be explained further.

1.2 Sentient and non-sentient beings as subservient to Brahman:

In explaining the relation of Brahman to cit and acit, there are different interpretations. The central teaching of Vēdānta is that while Brahman, the soul and the physical universe are all different and equally eternal, are at the same time inseparable is brought out well. It connotes that both sentient and non-sentient beings are dependent upon Brahman. In other words, Brahman is the central principal of both the sentient and non-sentient beings. Although the three substances are different, Brahman is the source for their existence. This is being established by Nammāḡvār in the following hymn:

'nām, avaṅ ivaṅ yuvaṅ avai ivai yuval evai
tām avar ivar yuvar atu itu utu etu
vīm avai ivai yuval avai nalam tīṅkavai
ām avai āyavai āyinaṅra avarē.¹³

I give below a beautiful and definitive translation of the hymn by A.K.Rāmānujan:

'We hear and that man, this man, and that
other in-between and that woman, this
woman, and that other, whoever, those
people and these and these others
in-between, this thing, that thing, and this
other in-between, whichever, all things
dying, these things, those things, those
others in-between, good things, bad
things, things that were, that will be,
being all of them, He stands there'

A.K.Rāmānujan: observes that this hymn is enclosed between 'we here' (Nām) and 'He there'(the Lord-Avarē); contained between these two are all things, all persons, all beings. After the long enumeration of the many, the many is folded back into the one- the hymn's movement enacts this becoming of the many into the one. The subject of the sentence comes at the end, with the last word, avar (He), the Lord. The enfolding and the unfolding are the same thing seen from different directions. The Lord is one, becomes many, yet remains one. After all the tenses of past and future, the hymn ends with a participle qualifying 'Him' in 'āyiniṇṇa avarē', 'He

who stands there, or is there', having become all things and persons. 'ninra-tu' means 'that which is permanent, immovable, remainder, as standing over'. Though he has become, and is, all of things mentioned, he is not them - he stands there, apart.¹⁴

This is a very important hymn wherein Nammāzvār establishes the philosophy of Vēdānta, particularly the two passages of Chāndōgya Upaniṣad, which speak about the dependence of sentient and non-sentient beings on Brahman. It is difficult to know directly the essence of the Upaniṣadic passages. Śrī Rāmānuja succinctly dealt the passages in his texts. Following him, Nampillai ably explains the hymn by citing those passages. The Cāndōgya Upaniṣad says: 'sarvaṃ khalvidaṃ brahma tajjalān iti śānta upāśīta'¹⁵. It means that 'all this is Brahman, let a man meditate with calm mind on this world as beginning, ending and breathing in Brahman'. In the text, 'Sarvaṃ Khalvidaṃ Brahma', 'Brahma' denotes the Brahman whose body consists of spiritual and non-spiritual entities in subtle state i.e. called 'sūkṣma cidacit viśiṣṭa Brahmaṃ' 'Sarva' means effected Brahman with universe i.e. called 'stūla cidacit viśiṣṭa Brahmaṃ'. These both states of Brahman are called 'all this is Brahman's. Nampillai quotes another passage from the same Upaniṣad

as follows: 'Aitadātmayam Idam Sarvam (Tat Satyam sa Ātmā) tat tvam asi Śvētakēṭō'¹⁶ which means that all this world (cit and acit) has that (sat) as its ātman and hence is real and that is the (inner) soul; That thou Art. In the present stage, the text 'tat tvam asi' is important in this passage. The word 'tvam' means 'You' i.e. 'You' that mere previously held to be no more than the operator of a certain body one in reality, a modification of the Brahman, because 'you' constitute His body, and therefore 'you' terminate in this Brahman. Hence 'tattvam' denotes only the inner ruler of 'tvam' as differentiated by the mode 'tvam'. Since Brahman is the soul of the embodied individual soul, He has the same name as that individual soul. The word 'tat' refers to Brahman as the one who is the cause of the world, one who is above of all perfections, the immaculate and untransmutable one; whereas 'tvam' refers to that same Brahman under the aspect of inner ruler of the individual soul as being modified by the embodied soul. So, it is said that the words, 'tat' and 'tvam' both apply to the same Brahman but under different aspects.ⁱ Following the above two Upaniṣadic themes only, Nammāzvār introduced the above hymn in a nutshell.

When we look into the commentary of Nampillai, he explicitly gave the meaning based on those two Upaniṣadic passages. Based on the text, 'idam sarvam Brahmā khalu' Nampillai establishes that 'āy nindra avarē' means that Brahman who stands there as antaryāmi for those things. In other words, all sentient and non-sentient beings are sustained, directed and controlled by the Brahman. Though the 'beings' and 'Brahman' look identical, we cannot say they are really identical. Nampillai, following Śrī Rāmānuja, applied the theory of Sāmānādikarṇya.¹⁸ This means that it is the application to one object of several words with different functions. Śrī Rāmānuja says that this conveys the idea of one thing being equally qualified by several attributes each of which has its own distinctive meaning and motive and embodies the unity of difference.¹⁹ The truth is eminently applicable to those Upaniṣadic passage in this hymn.

In the same way, there are number of hymns in Tiruvāymoḡi explaining this aspect.²⁰ With a view to liberating the sentient beings from the sufferings of births, Brahman has given several paths - karma, jñāna, bhakti and prapatti. But the sentient beings, due to their accumulated result of sinful actions are

not aware of its eternal relations with Brahman. In addition, he also showed that He himself is the means to attain Him. For those who realised this path, Brahman by his benevolence helps them to realise Him through meditation. This is well stated in the Upaniṣads. Based on this, Nammāzṅvār establishes that the Brahman is a means (Hitā) for liberation (Mōkṣa).

1.3 Brahman as a means (Hitā) for liberation (Mōkṣa):

The Muṇḍakōpaniṣad, for instance, states that the soul cannot be grasped by explicitation, nor by mere knowledge, nor by great erudition; He alone whom God himself elects can attain Him; He singles out to serve as His body, and to him Brahman reveals his form and attributes. The passage is 'Nāyamātmā pravacanēna labhyō na mēdhya na bahunā śrutēna yam ēvaīṣa tēna labhyā tasyaiṣa ātmā vṛṇutē tanum svām'²¹ which means that the Brahman is not attainable either through thinking or by meditation or by much learning. Following the statement Nammāzṅvār says 'terital niṇṇaltal eṇṇalākāttirumāl'.²² which means that Brahman is not to be realised through learning, contemplation or meditation. He can only be grasped by meditation that takes the

form of bhakti. Hence, a person, who with Immeasurable devotion meditates on Him, to whom only Brahman will show Immeasurable love. Such a loveable devotee is elected by Brahman. That loveable person attains Him. As concise as this correlation is, according to Nampillai, Nammāzvār establishes that as stated in the Upaniṣad, Lord whom he chooses, he will reach Him, to that person only Lord shows his attributes and so on. That form is to be meditated upon. In conformity with this Upaniṣadic text, Nammāzvār explains in number of hymns on this aspect.²³

From the ocean like Tiruvāymozi, with a ladle like my little knowledge and with the guidance of commentaries, I could present the most sublime truths of Indian philosophy as revealed by Nammāzvār in Tiruvāymozi.

References

1. *Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p.46.
2. *The Philosophy of Visistadvaita*, p. 18-19.
3. *Vēdārtha Sangraha of Śrī Rāmānujā*, p.250-1.
4. *The Philosophy of Visistadvaita*, p.577.
- 5 *Bhaktāmṛtaṁ viśvajanaṇumōdanaṁ
sarvārthadaṁ śrīśaṭṭhakōpavāṇmayam |
Sahasraśākhōpaniṣatsamāgamam
namāmyaham drāviḍavēdasāgaram ||*

6. *Vēdārtha Sangraha, Śrī Bhashya, Vēdāntā Sara, Vēdāntā Dīpa, Gīta Bhashya, Gadya Trya, Bhagvat Aradhana Karma.*
7. *Ācārya Hrudayam sutra 65.*
8. *Dramidopanishad Ttparya Ratnavli, sloka 1, Bhagavad vishayam p.204.*
9. *Svetasvataropanishad 6. 18.*
10. *Tiruvāymozi 1. 1. 8.*
11. *Ibid. 36 Padī.*
12. *Tiruvāymozi 4. 10.2; 6.6.4; 6.6.5; 7.5.4; 7.9.2; and so on.*
13. *Tiruvāymozi 1. 1. 4.*
14. *Hymns for the Drowning p. 122-5.*
15. *Cāndōgya Upaniṣad 3. 14. 1.*
16. *Ibid. 6. 12.3.*
17. *Vēdārtha Sangraha of Śrī Rāmānujā, p. 195-6.*
18. *Tiruvāymozi 1. 1. 4 36 Padī.*
19. *ibid. 36 Padī.*
20. *Tiruvāymozi 6.2.8; 7.9.10; 8.1.9; 10.2.7; 10.5.3; and so on.*
21. *Mundakopanishad 3.2.3.*
22. *Tiruvāymozi 6.9. 11.*
23. *Tiruvāymozi 2.4.2; 3.2.5; 7.2.3; 7.3.1; 8.5.1; 8.7.4; 8.7.8; and so on*

AN INTRODUCTION TO UPANIṢADIC THOUGHTS IN TIRUVĀYMOZI

The religious culture of India is based on Vēdās. The Vēdās, which are divided broadly into Pūrva and Uttara Kāṇḍās are mainly concerned with four Puruṣārthās - Dharma, Artha, Kāma, and Mōkṣa. The Pūrva Kāṇḍa deals with the first three Puruṣārthās while the Uttara Kāṇḍa speaks about Mōkṣa. The Uttara Kāṇḍa or Brahma Kāṇḍa is the concluding parts of Vēdās, otherwise called Upaniṣad or Vēdānta.

Generally Upaniṣad means 'a secret'. The Amarakōśa states 'Dharmērahasyupaniṣad' (3,3,93). The Upaniṣads contain the essence of Vēdās. Hence, they must be taught by knowing the worthiness of learner. The term 'Upaniṣad' may be splitted into two words i.e. 'upa' and 'Niṣad'. 'upa' means 'nearer' and 'Niṣad' means sitting - the compound word Upaniṣad means a disciple sitting nearer to Ācārya receives the knowledge. Śudarśana Sūri says that Upaniṣad means 'nearer to Brahman'. In other words, the experience of Brahman. That means: the experience of nature of Brahman, His greatness, His attributes, His glories, His lordship etc. i.e. Advāraka Bhagavat Pratipādakatvam Upaniṣaṇatvam'. In Śrīrangarājastava Uttara

Śatakam, Bhaṭṭar says that Lord's tenderness, prowess, love towards devotees, benevolence, beauty etc. are preserved secretly as a treasure in Upaniṣads.²

There are ten important and most authentic Upaniṣads which have commentaries written by Śrīvaiṣṇava Ācāryās. They are: Īśa Kēna Kata Praśna Muṇḍa Māṇḍūkya Tīrtiya Altarēyamam Ca Chāndōkyam Brahmadāraṇyakam Daśa. Apart from these, Śvētāsvatara, Kauṣītaki, Subhāla, Nārāyaṇa, Atarvasika and Mahōpaniṣads also have commentaries written by our Ācāryās.

Hārīta Smṛti also states that Rṣīs who were well versed in Vēdās opine that all our Vēdās, Vēdāntās, Itihāsās and Purāṇās speak about the five fold knowledge or Artha Pañcakam only.³ The Artha Pañcakam brings out the essentials of Viśiṣṭādvaita in its five fold knowledge i.e. the nature of God, the nature of soul, the nature of means, the nature of obstacles and the nature of goal. The true meanings of these five fold knowledge are hidden in Nammāzvār's Tiruvāymozi.

Tiruvāymozi and Upaniṣads:

The Āzvārs, twelve in number, were the early torch-bearers of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. They enriched it by

their soul-stirring hymns. Nammāzvār is the Head among the Āzvārs. He composed four Prabandams. They are Tiruviruttam, Tiruvāslriyam, Periya Tiruvandādi and Tiruvāymozi.

In Purāṇās like Mārkhandēya Purāṇa It is said that in every Kaliyugā, the eternal Vēdās and the Drāviḍa Vēdās will be revealed by the spiritual saints. like Vyāsa, who at the end of Dvāparayuga separated the Vēdās into four parts i.e. Rīg, Yajur, Atarva and Sāma, the eternal Tamil hymns of Āzvārs will be revealed by Saṭakōpamuni in Kaliyuga.⁴

In Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa It is said that the Mahā Viṣṇu asserted to a Muni about the birth of Nammāzvār and Drāviḍa Vēdā. That means: the Ādiśēṣa, a Nitya Sūri in Vaikuṇṭha, will disguise himself as splices of Tamarind tree, whose leaves do not fold up at night, on the banks of Tāmiraparaṇi in Āzvārttirunagari and for the sake of easy understanding of Vēdās, the Lord by His solemn vow, will reveal the essence of caste, on the banks of Tāmiraparaṇi, where Brahmā did penance.⁵

Vēdānta Dēśika, in his Dramiḍōpaniṣac Tātparya Ratnāvaḷi, states that Tiruvāymozi has the status of equality with that of Vēdās and essence of the Upaniṣads.⁶

Azaklyamaṇavāḷapperumā! Nāyanār also established the equal status of Tiruvāymozi with the Vēdās as it carries the essence of Vēdāntās In his treatise called Ācārya Hṛdayam.⁷

With a view to eliciting the hidden meanings of Vēdāntās that are rendered in Tamil by Nammāzvār In Tiruvāymozi, there are five commentaries written in different period by five Ācāryās.⁸ Among these, Nampiḷḷal Īṭu is an exhaustive commentary which speaks about Nammāzvār's inner thought. There are three introductions for Īṭu commentary. In the first introduction, Nampiḷḷal quotes Periyavaṅkīpurattu Nambi's opinion of stating that Tiruvāymozi reveals the Artha Pañcakam as stated in Hārīta Smṛti.⁹ Apart from this, there are more than 600 quotations from Upaniṣads i.e. Kēna Kata, Muṇḍaka, Taitriya, Aitarēya, Chāndōgya, Brahadāraṇyaka, Śvētāsvatara, Kauṣītaki, Atarvaśika, Mahā and Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣads referred to in this commentary. Since Upaniṣads also explain the five fold knowledge, I lay my thoughts to identify the Upaniṣadic thoughts In Tiruvāymozi under five fold knowledge scheme.

The nature of God:

Aspects of the nature of God may be classified

thus: Brahman has three fold cause for the Universe; sentient and non-sentient beings subservient to Brahman; Antaryāmi; beauties of God; Instructor of Vēdās to Brahma; Immeasurable attributes like limitlessness, tasteful, the light of all knowledge that illumines, supremacy over all Gods, simplicity and repository super excellent traits like joyfulness (Ānandamaya), vouch-safed wisdom-love of Brahman, Śarīra Śarīri Bhāva and so on. All these can be established from Upaniṣads with that of Tiruvāymoḻi hymns.

For example, here one aspect in the nature of God is explained.

Brahman as three-fold cause of the universe:

Brahman is the three-fold cause. That is Upādāna Kāraṇa (material cause); Nimitta Kāraṇa (Instrumental cause); and Sahakāri Kāraṇa (cooperative cause). He is the material cause for the sentient and non-sentient beings as they are inseparable from Him and He is the inner controller. He is the cooperative cause as He is taking His special attributes of knowledge, power, etc. He is the one who wills creation freely, it is therefore clear that He is the instrumental or efficient cause. Like in Valkuṇṭam also, He is combined with Nityasūris and

muktās besides divine non-sentient beings (Acit) as He is the material cause. He is the cooperative cause for Nityasūris and muktās as they have benefit of utilising His knowledge and power; He is the instrumental cause for them as He is combined with His wishes.¹⁰

In Taltriyōpaniṣad Ānandavallī, it is said that 'He desired let me be many, May I create other things'.¹¹ Commenting on this, Raṅagarāmānuja says that the Brahman, which is Ānandamaya, desired to become Dēvās, the human, the animals and the non-ambulants, first by creating the five constituent elements viz. ether, air, fire, water and earth. It means individual (Vyaṣṭi) and aggregate (Samaṣṭi) creations done by His Sankalpa.¹²

Following the theme, Nammāzvār says

'Maṇṇum Nīrum Eriyum Nalvāyuvum
Viṇṇumāy Viriyum Emprāṇaiyē'¹³

Here, the commentator Nampīlāl says that the Brahman, who is the cause for the five elements, is an Antaryāmi in creating many things i.e. the Dēvās, the human, the animals and non-ambulants as stated in the above Upaniṣad.¹⁴ Another commentator Periyavāccānpīlāl says that the desire of Brahman as stated in the above Upaniṣad to become many is to be thought of.¹⁵ Vādikēśari

Jīyar says that Brahman is my Svāmi, as the five elements are the mode (Prakārā) to create the Universe by Him as stated in Upaniṣad.¹⁶

Before the creation of this Universe, 'Sat' (real being) only was in the beginning and there is no second thing. That 'sat' thought 'May I be many; May I grow forth'. This is clearly stated in Chāndōgya Upaniṣad as follows: 'My dear son, this real being was alone in the beginning and without a second.'¹⁷ That means: in Praḷayakāla, it was only as *sat* in one name and one body. Now It has many names and bodies. For example, in the production of a pot, clay is the Upādāna Kāraṇa (material cause), potter, the Nimitta Kāraṇa (instrumental cause) and the potter's wheel and other accessories the Sahakāri Kāraṇa (cooperative cause). On the other hand, for the origination of the Universe, Brahman Himself solely constitutes all the above three causes. Nammāzvār in a nut shell says 'Tanimutalvanai'.¹⁸ Here, 'tani' means Brahman who creates the Universe by His sankalpa. So He is Nimitta Kāraṇa (instrumental cause); 'mudai' means Brahman in Upādāna Kāraṇa (material cause); Sahakāri Kāraṇa (cooperative cause) is implied.¹⁹ Vādikēśari Jīyar says that the nature of Brahman is Samasta Jagatēka Kāraṇatvam.²⁰

In another hymn, Āzvār says 'Mutal Tani Vittu'.²¹ Here, 'mudal' is Nimitta Kāraṇa i.e. none second to Him; 'tani' is Sahakāri Kāraṇa i.e. matchless to Him and 'vittu' is Upādāna Kāraṇa i.e. material cause.²²

Likewise, there are number of hymns in Tiruvāymozi which explain the Upaniṣadic thought with particular reference to three-fold cause of Brahman for the creation of the Universe.

The nature of soul (Jīva):

The nature of soul is classified under four aspects: i.e. the state of honorific soul; the state of Muktās; the negation of independency to Muktās; and the nature of status and desire to know Brahman by the soul. For example, I am explaining the state of honorific soul.

The state of honorific soul:

It is said in Tatvatrayam of Pillai Lōkācārya that the soul is eternal; it is atomic in size; it is manifest; it is different from body, senses, mind, breath and Intellect; it is the native of non-matter; it is guided and sustained by and is ordained by Brahman.²³ Such souls have a right to live in communion with the God like eternally free souls i.e. Nityasūris and Muktās, who enjoy the constant

service in Valkuṇṭha. But these souls, which has Śarīra, have lost that right and ideal as if non-existent (*Asat*). Such state is called Indeed non-existent (*asat*) and when the soul has perception of Brahman, It is called sentient being (*Cit*). It is said in Taittiriyaopaniṣad that If one says that Brahman does not exist, he himself becomes non-existent. If anyone knows that Brahman does exist, they think that he is existing on account of that.²⁴ Raṅagarāmānuja says that in this mantra 'Brahma' means the blissful Brahman. One who knows the Jñāna of blissful Brahman, that soul will attain liberation, the ignorant soul will have births in the cycle of Saṃsāra.²⁵ Nammāzvār, the only soul - Mahātmā, who experienced the nature of soul states as follows:

'Māṛimārippalapṛappum Piṛantu Aṭiyaiyaṭaintu
Uḷḷam Tēṇi Īṇṇipattu Iru Veḷḷam Yāṇ Mūzṇṇēṇ'²⁶

That means: Nammāzvār went on taking birth after birth in Dēvās, the human, the animals and the non-ambulants and one day by the God's spontaneous grace, he realised Him, who alighted on him, took him to His nearness, so that he realised that He is his Svāmi and he is His subservient survivor became a sentient being, immersed in the inexhaustible ocean of blissful enjoyment.

In another hymn, Āzvār states that when he realises Brahman, he is *sat*, and when he is not able to realize Him, he is *asat* as stated in the Upaniṣad.²⁷ In this hymn, Āzvār feels that Brahman by His spontaneous grace showed His nature, Divyamaṇagaḷa Vīgṛaṇ, attributes, glory etc. by dispelling ignorance about Him. Nampillai rightly declares that Āzvār's soul was changed in appearance as stated in the Upaniṣad 'Asannēva Sa Bhavati', which means the soul is in the *asat* state. When Brahman alighted on Āzvār and revealed as His nature etc. Āzvār's state is 'Santamēṇaṁ Tadō Vidhuḥ', which means the *sat* state.²⁸ In this way, there are number of Tiruvāymozi hymns which explain the nature of soul.

The Nature of Means:

The means to attain Mōkṣa is dealt with in two aspects;

- I. to find a path to reach the lotus feet of Brahman and Brahman Himself as a Means (Upāyā) and
- II. by worshipping Brahman, one can reach Him.

For example, I am explaining that the Brahman as a means for liberation.

Brahman as a means for liberation:

With a view to liberating the sentient beings from the sufferings of births, God has made several efforts. But the sentient beings, due to its accumulated result of sinful actions, not aware of its eternal relations with Brahman. For such souls, God has shown the path of Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti and Prapatti Mārga. He also showed that He Himself is the means to attain Him. For those who realised this path, Brahman by His benevolence, helps them to realise Him through meditation. This is well stated in the Upaniṣads. In Muṇḍakōpaniṣad it is said that this soul cannot be grasped by explicating, nor by mere knowledge, nor by great erudition; he alone whom God Himself elects can attain Him; He singles His soul out to serve as His body, and to him God reveals His form and attributes.²⁹ Here, the first line of the above Upaniṣad says that the God is not attainable either through thinking or by meditation or by much learning.³⁰ Following this statement, Nammāzvār says, 'Terital Niṇaital Eṇṇalākāttirumāl'.³¹ Nampillal quotes the Upaniṣad line and establishes that the Brahman is not attainable by mere learning or contemplation or meditation.³² That implies that He can only be grasped by meditation that takes the form of Bhakti, not merely by knowing Him

through texts. Hence a person, who with immeasurable devotion meditates on Him, to whom only Brahman will show Immeasurable love. Such loveable devotee is elected by God. That loveable person will attain Him. This is stated in the Upaniṣad on the following line: 'Yamēvaiṣa Vrunutē Tēna Labhyaḥ'.. Based on this quotation, Nammāṣvār, with the voice of a mother showed her devotion to God in a hymn.

Vāḷ Nutal Immaṭavaral Ummaik
Kāṇum Ācāiyuḷ Naikīṇṇāḷ, Viṭal
Vāṇaṇ Āylam Tōḷ Tuṇittīr Ummaik
Kāṇa Nīr Irakkamīṭē³³

Here, mother states that her daughter Parāṅkusa Nāyaki of bright forehead wastes away with grief for the sake of God and stands consumed by a burning desire. Nampillai explains Āṣvār's inner thought as follows: 'the grief of Parāṅkusa Nāyaki is not the means; Lord's compassion is the means for her liberation'. Further Āṣvār was the benefactor of Lord's grace as stated in Taitriyōpaniṣad 'Santamēnaṁ Tadō Vidhuḥ'. Hence he is to be chosen by Lord.³⁴ Further Nammāṣvār clearly supplements the above quotation wherein Lord's selection of a devotee to whom He will shower His Divya Maṇagaḷa Vighrahaṁ and attributes in another hymn.³⁵ Again with the voice of a mother, Āṣvār

clears that the Lord only to show His Divya Maṇagaḷa Vighrahaṁ by the grace to the soul whom He chooses in the following line; 'Kaṭkilī Uṇṇaikkāṇumāru Aruḷāy Kākuttā Kaṇṇanē Ennum'.³⁶ Mentioning the quotation of the above Upaniṣad, Nampillai says that the Lord will exhibit His exquisite form and splendour to the subjects of His choice. It is this that embodies the Nāyaki to call upon Him to appear before her.³⁷

In congruence with the above Upaniṣad line: 'Tasyaiṣa Ātmā Vpr̥ṇutē Tanum Svām', Nammāzvār narrates the Lord's Divya Maṇagaḷa Vighrahaṁ as shown to Him as follows: 'Veḷḷalccuri Caṇakoṭu Āṇiyēnti Tāmaraikkāṇṇaṇ Eṇ Neñcinūṭē Puḷḷaikkaṭākinra Vāṇraikkāṇīr'.³⁸ That means: 'How can I express the glorious vision that sways my mind, the way the lotus eyed Lord mounts the bird (Garuḍa) holding the spiral conch white and the discus in hand which is what you people cannot comprehend?'. Āzvār expresses the glorious vision that moves in all directions in mind the lotus eyed Lord as a leader emitting the Garuḍa and adorning white coloured spiral conch and the discus in hand which one cannot comprehend. Nampillai establishes that as stated in the Upaniṣad, Lord whom He chooses, he will reach Him, to that person only Lord shows His

attributes etc. That form is to be meditated upon.³⁹

Śrī Rāmānuja also explains in Śrī Bhāṣya that as stated in the Upaniṣad that mere hearing, reflection and meditation do not suffice to gain the Self, and then declares 'whom the God chooses, by him it may be gained'. Now a 'chosen' one means a most beloved person: the relation being that he by whom that Self is held most dear is also most dear to the self.⁴⁰ That the Lord Himself endeavours that this most beloved person should gain the Self, He Himself declares 'When people are always well disposed and worship Me, I am pleased and I bestow on them a disposition by which they may attain Me, to show them My mercy I dispel - immanent in their souls - the darkness of their ignorance with the radiant torch of knowledge'⁴¹

In the same way, there are number of hymns in Tiruvāymoḡi which explains the nature of Means.

There are number of Upaniṣadic quotations that can explain the other two aspects of nature of obstacles and the nature of goal from the hymns of Tiruvāymoḡi.

In this way, all the important Vedic and Upaniṣadic concepts can be traced in Tiruvāymoḡi which bestows the equal status on Tiruvāymoḡi and Upaniṣads.

Notes and References

1. *Śrī Bhashya Srutaprakasika on the verse 'Parasaryavacassudhamupaniṣat'.*
2. *Śrī Rangarajastavam Uttara sataka sloka 36. P.B.A Svāmi commentary p.67*
3. *Haritasmṛiti: Prāpyasya Bhmaṇō Rūpaṃ Prāptuścāpratyagātmanaḥ Prāptyupāyam Phalaṃ Prāptaḥ Tadā Prāpti Virōdi Ca....*
4. *Divya Prabandha Valbhava Vivekaha, Tr. T.A. Krishnamacharya, p.21.*
5. *ibid.p.23.*
6. *Bhagavat Viṣayaṃ vol.I, p.204.*
7. *Ācārya Hrudayam churnikas 40,42,43,50, and 65.*
8. *Upadēśaratnamāla, hymn 39.*
9. *Bhagavat Viṣayaṃ vol.I p.190-191.*
10. *Ācārya Hrudayam churnika commentary 220.*
11. *Taittirīyopaniṣad Anandavalli 2.6: Sōakāmayata Bahusyām Prajāyēyēti.*
12. *ibid. Bhāṣya p.35.*
13. *Tiruvāymozi 1. 10.3.*
14. *1. 10.2 - 36 Padl..*
15. *1. 10.2 - 24 Padi.*
16. *1. 10.2 - 12 Padi.*
17. *Cāndōgya Upaniṣad: 6.2.1: 'Sadēva Śaumya Idam Agra Āsīt Ēkamēva Advitīyaṃ'.*
18. *Tiruvāymozi 2.7. 12.*
19. *2.7. 12 - 36 Padl.*
20. *2.7. 12 - 12 Padl.*
21. *Tiruvāymozi 10.10.9; 22. 10.10.9 Arumpadam.*
23. *Tatvatrayam churnika 4 commentary.*

24. *Taittirīyopaniṣad Anandavalli 5.1: 'Asannēva Sa Bhavati |
Asat Brahmēti Vēda Cēt | Asti Brahmēti Cēt Vēdā |
Santamēnam Tatō Vidhuḥ'.*
25. *ibid. Bhāṣya p.33: anandamaya sadasttvajnanath
moksasamsrow bhavati.*
26. *Tiruvāymozi 2.6.8.*
27. *ibid. 1.7.5.*
28. *ibid. 1.7.5 - 36 Padi.*
29. *Mundakopanishad 3.2.3: Nāyamātmā Pravacanēna
Labhyō Na Mēdhyā Na Bahunā Śrutēna Yam Ēvaiṣa
Tēna Labhyā Tasyaiṣa Ātmā Vṛṇutē Tanum Svām'.*
30. *ibid.*
31. *Tiruvāymozi 6.9.11.*
32. *ibid. - 36 Padi.*
33. *ibid. 2.4.2.*
34. *ibid.2.4.2 - 36 Padi.*
35. *ibid. 3.2.5.*
36. *ibid. 7.2.3.*
37. *ibid. 7.2.3.- 36 Padi.*
38. *ibid. 7.3.1.*
39. *ibid.7.3.1.- 36 Padi.*
40. *Vēdānta Sutra 1.1.1 p.15-16.*
41. *Bhagavat Gīta 10.10.*

BRIDAL MYSTICISM OF NAMMĀZVĀR IN TIRUVIRUTTAM .

Tiruviruttam is the first and foremost Prabandham (poetical work) of Nammāzvār. The other three Prabandhams are: Tiruvāciriyam, Periya Tiruvandādi and Tiruvāymozi . These four Prabandhams are the essence of four Vēdās. Tiruviruttam is the gist of Rug Vēdā. It is placed as the fifth Prabandham in the third part of Nālāyira Divya Prabandham called Iyaṟpa.

In this Prabandham, Nammāzvār submits his devotional supplication to the Lord. The word 'Vrittam' in Sanskrit becomes in Tamil 'viruttam' according to Tamil sound laws. Although it has several meanings, here Viruttam denotes 'events'. Nammāzvār, who had the spiritual vision of the Lord, requested Him to make him free from contact with the śarīra (body) which prevents his divine experience. Āzvār feels that living in this world is difficult and his great devotion or love towards God is the way of saving him. These events comprise the Prabandham. Like 'Śrī' in Sanskrit, 'Tiru' in Tamil, is an epithet, that suggests the glory of holiness. Although 'viruttam' means the activities or deeds, as a noun, it also literally indicates the effect and through it the cause as well. Tiruviruttam the name is given to the

treatise by metonymy.

In the very first hymn of this Prabandham, Āzvār expresses his difficulties as follows:

'False knowledge, wrong conduct, body of dirt
such is our life, grant us the becoming
that this may not be. Lord of the immortals!
Hear my orison, all pervading God!'

(translation of Prema Nandakumar)

Our Ācāryās named the work 'Tiruviruttam' to indicate its essential message. It is also opined that though Āzvār speaks his experiences in Nāyikābhāva, Tiruviruttam may be considered as the description of Lakṣmī's activities. Among the 100 hymns of this Prabandham except the first and the last hymn, the other 98 hymns are according to the traditional description of Tamil love-poetry. Some are allegorical and some are in esoteric sense. These are enlightened in the commentaries of Ācārya Nampīlār, Periyavāccāṅkīlār, Vādikēśari Azakiya Maṇavāḷaccīyar, Periya Parakālasvāmi.

Although there are several ways in which a devotee can have experiences of God, like reciting His names, describing the beauties of Divya Maṅgaḷa Viṅraha, praising the greatness of Divya Dēśās favoured by God and speaking about the

greatness of Śrīvaiṣṇavās who lived in those Divya Dēśās. There is a distinctive feature of worship of God. That is, outpouring one's inner thoughts frankly, assuming the role of Nāyaki. There are several hymns in this Prabandham that narrates this kind of experience on three roles: a mother, a girl-friend and the heroine herself (i.e. Parāṇakusa Nāyaki). Though a river has several tributaries with different names, it has one important name. Likewise the above three stages are the outpouring of the Āzvār only. Here a doubt may arise as to how the Āzvār can possibly assume the role of a Nayika. It is said that Āzvār by himself does not take the form in disguise. But a situation wherein one loses the senses is arrived at. Hence, there is similarity between Nammāzvār and the Lord's Consort.¹ There is a saying that all souls are feminine in relation to God; and He is the one and only male; souls are subservient only to God and not to others; souls depend only on God; happiness results from union and restlessness from separation; God is the only protector and other beings are to be protected by Him.² In Viṣṇu Dharma, it is said that Vāsudēva is evidently a Puruṣa and other beings are feminine.³ In this situation Nammāzvār quite naturally speaks in the capacity of a lady in love. It is said that when

Rāmā visited the Dhandakavana, the Ṛṣīs, charmed by the handsomeness of Rāmā, wanted to become women in the next birth. They became cowherd girls to embrace Kṛṣṇa in Kṛṣṇāvatāra. Unlike this Nammāzvār became a woman and experienced Lord's beauties as a lady in deep love. Ācārya Azakiyamaṇavāḷapperumā! Nāyaṇār, in his text Ācārya Hṛdayam, explained that Nammāzvār's mystical experience can be placed under two aspects: 'Nāṇattil Taṇ Pēccu. Prēmattil Peṇ Pēccu'.⁴ It means that the Āzvār speaks in his natural voice in his state of prayerful bhakti, but when his mystical love towards God intensifies, he speaks in the voice of a lady.

Thus, bridal mysticism of Nammāzvār is unique with special features. In Tiruviruttam, the Āzvār speaks in the capacity of the Nayika in 56 hymns. Among these, Parankusa Nayika pours out her love-passion for Tirumal in 17 hymns. Based upon these hymns, the different stages of mystic experience are classified as follows:

1. Nāyaki amazed to see the dark night
(hymn 16)
2. Happiness in seeing the Thulasi garland of
Lord (27)

- 2.1 - the complexion of Lord In the blue
waterlily (38)
- 2.2 - His graces (45)
- 2.3 - Good omens (48)
- 2.4 - Cool breeze (56)
- 3. Appearance of Lord In a vision (39)
- 4. Immersion in the beautiful eyes of Lord (43)
- 5.. Sending bees as emissaries to Lord (54)
- 6. Graceful looks of Lord (63)
- 7. Lord only becoming the Means (99) and so on.
- 8. Similarity with clouds (32)

1. Amazed to see the dark night:

In the verse 'Palapala Ūzika!', Parāṅkusa Nāyaki is amazed to see the dark night and told her maid that this dark night came into existence like many kalpas, making her suffer, but with His presence it fleets like a second; but even then she suffers. She blesses the night for its skillfulness in creating smallness and greatness for her suffering.⁵ Nampillai gives in a lucid manner, the inner meaning for this situation, quoting Rāmāyana:

"Before boarding the boat to cross the Ganges on his banishment to the forest, Rāmā tells Sumantra to go back to Ayōdhya and look after his parents and particularly the health of Daśaratha. But

Sumantra stays back in Guha's house for two or three days. Sumantra later informs Daśaratha as follows:

*"Guhēna Sārdham Tatraiva Sthitōasmi Divasānbahūn |
Āśayā Yadi Mām Rāmaḥ Punaḥ Śabdāpayēditi" | 1⁶*

It means that Sumantra stayed for some days in Guha's house, as he hoped that Rāma call him again. Here for the word '*Bhahūn Divasān*' (many days), Nampillai means that due to distress of Rāmā's separation, the days seem prolonged in Sumantra's mind. However, Nampillai had a doubt about the distress of Sumantra when he stayed in Guha's house and asked his Ācārya Nañciyār to clarify the matter. The Jiyar stated that when Sumantra saw certain parts of the area where Rāma had stayed, his distress increased and the days became long to him.⁷

2. Happiness in seeing the Thulasi garland of Lord:

In the verse '*Cēmam Ceṅkōṇ Aruḷē*', Nāyaki, by putting on the Lord's thulasi garland, says that the north wind that blew like a fierce fire had become cool.⁸ Nampillai says that it is the grace of Lord which protects the soul, whereas the grace of others is the cause for suffering. Further, he says that the faith that God is merciful turns evil to good, unlike

faith in others whose grace is occasioned and thus limited. When Nāyaki puts on the thulsi garland, at one end, it is cold and at another, it is warm. Nampillai explains this feature as follows: When one is redeemed from samsara, one reaches *Vaiṣṇava*. Then he will not think of this samsara at all. But the knowledge derived by one in samsara, has the two stages of remembrance and forgetfulness.⁹

2.1 Happiness in seeing the complexion of Lord in the blue waterlily:

In another hymn, 'Kaṭamāyinaḥkaḥ', the Nāyaki is delighted to see the complexion of Lord in the blue Indian waterlily in the coastal area (*neytai*) and thought that these must have performed continuous penance in water, which resulted in getting them the complexion of the Lord.¹⁰ Nampillai explains that these blue flower plants prefer the lake to forest like the *Rṣīs*, who travel all through the forest and prefer a suitable cool place near tanks/ponds to perform penance all through the seasons. These plants stay on standing erect on single stalks and blossom with the secretion of honey. These are verily like *Yōgīs*, who do penance by standing in water on a single leg in the hot sun, shedding tears of joy.¹¹

2.2 Rejoicing over His graces in the midst of sorrow:

In the verse 'Peruṅkēzalārtam', the Nāyaki, who was suffering the pangs of separation from the Lord, muses for a long time.¹² She then has forgotten the help rendered by the Lord and His unbreakable relationship with her. She recalls taking the lead given by her heart that the Lord not bothering about His own personal danger, rescued her from the pond into which she happened to slip while playing nearby. Indeed no one has had such liberty with the Lord. The Lord helped her like Varāha who saved Bhūdēvi from the cosmic deluge. Though Lord helped her only, she thinks that it legends to souls in general also. Nampillal says that even Pirāṭṭi, the Divine Consort wants the Lord to bestow grace on her. Commentator Nampillal refers to Rāmā's attitude in this connection, as mentioned in Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyana:

'Idānīm Mā Krutā Vīra Ēvaṃvidam Acintitam ।

Tvayī Kiñcit Samāpannē Kiṃ Kāryam Sītayā Mama । ।

Bharatēna Mahābhāhō Lakṣmaṇēṇa Yavīyasā ।

Śatrugnanēna Ca Śatrugna Śvaśarīrēṇa Vā Punah । ।¹³

Rāmā told Sugrīva that If something happened to him by his rash attack on Ravana what he derive

even living with Sītā, Bharata, Lakṣmaṇa, Śatrugṇa and his own body? But here, Lord, leaves His own dear Pīrāṭṭī (Lakṣmī) and comes to shower grace on His devotees, particularly Parāṅkusa Nāyaki.¹⁴

2.3 Happiness over good omen:

In the rejoicing mood the Nāyaki in the verse 'melliya ākkal', states, that she heard the lizard's twitter in her house. She felt that this is a good omen indicating Lord's quick arrival to her presence and she bore with the pangs of separation from Him. Her girl friend asked her whether the reason for her patience in suffering came from the words of the Lord, who had assured her that He would not leave her; and that even when away, He would not tarry for long or whether it was otherwise. The Nāyaki replied that a worm born in a wound, does not know the world outside. Likewise, she lives solely on the Lord's love and is not aware of anything else.¹⁵ However there is an age old belief about the lizard's sound as a good omen; since she heard it in her house, she felt this as a good omen of the Lord's expected arrival.

In Divyārtha Dīpika, Śrī Kāñci Svāmi beautifully explains the situation as follows with the Svāpadēśa meaning:¹⁶

There was a delay in the union of Parāṅkusa Nāyaki with the Lord. The separation was unbearable to her. There was a conversation between her companion and Nāyaki.

Companion: You should not hurry to get the experience of Lord in Vaikuṇṭha. With a view to reform the world, the Lord has kept you in this world to sing songs of His praises.

Nāyaki: 'With my very little knowledge and power, what kind of reform I can bring in this world'? (She identifies herself with the lowest worm limited to the wound from which it emerges and said as follows).

Nāyaki: I come from the lowest class, with little knowledge and the Lord caused me to sing songs involuntarily in His praises. He sang Himself through me'. The Āzvār says: 'The Lord, who is the greatest, caused me to sing hymns by His craftiness. This shows His marvellous power. He thought that there was no greatness if He Himself sang about His glories and goodness and He, Himself used poor me to sing hymns through me as is instrument'.

Vādikēśari Jīyar says that the Lord, who thought that Āzvār was the right person to reform the world, resided in his heart and tongue and Himself sang the hymns. Hence, the Nāyaki says,

'eṇṇālum taṇṇaicolliya cūzal tirumālavaṇ kavi yātu karṇēṇ' (what do I know about the praises that He caused me to sing?).¹⁷ Here in the expression 'yātu karṇēṇ', Nampillai finds implied the suggestion that the Lord first recited the songs when he sang the hymns.¹⁸ Kāñci Svāmi says that Āzvār sang the hymns involuntarily, without his conscious volition, spurred by overflowing bhakti, allowing nothing else to come in.¹⁹

2.4 Happiness over the cool breeze bringing His contact:

In the verse 'Viyaliṭam, having seen Parāṅkusa Nāyaki's distress of separation, her maid thinks that she may not survive in that state. The Nāyaki tells her that she had an experience of the Lord in the night unexpectedly and that she need not be afraid of her succumbing to sorrow, and she narrates how that experience came to her.²⁰

Vādikēśari Jīyar explains this point as follows: The Nāyaki felt the embrace of the Lord's tulsi garland in the cool breeze; it brought honey with the tulsi, touched her jewels and sense organs secretly removing her distress.²¹ Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal's explanatory comment in this context is insightful. The cool breeze touched her sense organs and

refreshed them, ending their eager thirst; it touched her jewels steadying them and ending their loosened state of sorrow.²²

Here Nampillai refers an event that took place during Rāmānujā's period.²³ When Rāmānuja was in the midst of his disciples, one of them asked Rāmānuja, 'What is the ślōkā which you think as a refuge?' One of the disciples, Ācārya Vaṅkipuṟattu Nambi reminds the words of Kṣatrabhandu. He says that Kṣatrabhandu wanted the Lord to think of him as he is an unwise man; a man of low standing; does of low things; his mind confounded by the influence on worldly matters that resulted to forget Him. He says that Lord even the Brahmā who has sprung from His navel lotus could not praise Lord and Lord who is commanding all may be pleased to protect by His grace.

Having heard this, Rāmānuja objected that this is not the right way of approach since Kṣatrabhandu, as a refugee (प्रणते) requests Lord for His grace. In this, one must have a clear mind before doing Śaraṇāgatī. Here, Kṣatrabhandu has self-conceit when he did Śaraṇāgatī. Rāmānuja says that if there is any suitableness on our side, it is difficult to accomplish the fruition. This will not help as a support for Upāya. It is only Lord as a means to

assent, which is liked by Him. Suppose if one develops Parabhakti, Parajñāna, Paramabhakti which are based only on his nature (Svarūpa Prayukta) and not considered as of his own (swathantra) and that will not give fruition. Then disciples asked what ślōka is to be remembered. Rāmānuja said that Kāliyan's words are to be remembered. Kāliyan says that he prays Lord to shower His grace on him as Lord is the Chief for all Dēvās and Nityasūrīs and as he is subservient to Lord, he has no skillful to praise or to do Arcana. Here, in the ślōkā, the word 'tē' implies the meaning of the sixth case ending, that is self-servient when Lord is the Chief.

So Kāliyan words are more appropriate than Kṣatrabhandu in this context. Likewise, Nayaki only looks for His grace without any sultableness in her.

3. Appearance of the Lord in a vision:

In a situation Parāṅkusa Nāyaki is enraptured by the Lord's vision, particularly by His beautiful eyes which appear shining everywhere before her and narrated the same to her maid friend²⁴. Śrī Kāñci Svāmi says that an appearance in one's vision implies uninterrupted meditation on a particular thing which appears everywhere. Here, the Nāyaki

is absorbed in Lord's eyes; she says that the Lord is the Chief of the gods and of people on earth; He is blue in complexion and His beautiful eyes appear to her everywhere; she identifies His blue-body-complexion with a blue mountain and His beautiful eyes with lotuses.²⁵ Nampillai explains this verse quoting Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa,²⁶ he refers to the description of Rāma, as given by Hanumān before Sīta in Sundara Kāṇḍā;

*Rāmaḥ Kamalapatrākṣaḥ Sarvabhūta Manōharaḥ ।

Rūpadākṣiṇya Sampannaḥ Prasūtō Janakātmajā ॥²⁷

It means that Rāma is the embodiment of all beauty; His eyes are beautiful like lotuses which are fresh, full blown, cool and benevolent, fascinating all living creatures. Nampillai comments that even monkeys (like Hanumān) which cannot be expected to be aware of what is to be done with the right hand and what is not to be done with the left hand, got absorbed in Rāmā's beauty. When this is so, the Nāyaki feels completely lost. Further Nampillai comments that the Nāyaki sees the imaginary appearance of Lord's auspicious body and His eyes take over all his body and she sees him as all eyes. Such a favour is done to her by Him who is the Chief of the world surrounded by oceans. He has all the like-minded gods like Brahma, as His

bond-slaves. Also He is the Chief of the Nityasūris like Garuda and Ādiśeṣa living in Vaikuṇṭham.²⁸

4. Immersion in the beautiful complexion of Lord:

In the verse 'Kaṇṇum', the Nāyaki travels from the Lord's eyes to His equally beautiful hands, feet and hue and says that even for Nityasūris these are beyond grasp. She describes the Lord's beautiful body as follows: His eyes, hands and feet are like lotuses; His body looks like a large dark mountain. Even the Nityasūris who are pre-eminent in wisdom, unlike worldly people, are not able to think or speak about it. The wisdom of celestials is indeed more than that of ordinary people. Among the celestials, the wisdom of Brahmā, the creator of the world is pre-eminent; the wisdom of the Muktās is even higher than that of Brahmā and the knowledge of Nityasūris is even more than that of the Muktās. Even these people are incapable of experiencing the Lord's beauties; but Āzṅvār in the guise of the Nāyaki enjoys the beauties of Lord, having been led to them from His beautiful eyes.²⁹

5. Sending bees as emissaries to Lord:

In the verse 'Vīcum Clrakāl' Nāyaki sends bees as messengers to Lord.³⁰ She says that the bees are

capable of taking her message to the Lord; they have mighty wings to go fast; but she does not have such strong hands and feet. Bees can reach Vaikuṇṭam quickly. But for her, it will not be possible. Hence, she requests them to repeat the message which she wanted to convey to the Lord, before leaving for Valkuṇṭam.³¹ Śrī Kāñci Svāmi says that if the bees repeat the message, she can find out any lapse in them and it will be set right by the Nāyaki. Then the bees may clearly convey her message, to the Lord and makes Him come back to her early. She will also be able to bear her separation from Him till then.³² Nampillai lucidly compares this situation with that of Sītā quoting a ślōkā from Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa:

*Yathā Taṃ Puruṣavyāghraṃ Gātraiḥ Śōkābhikaśintaiḥ |
Saṃsprṣṭvāyaṃ Sakāmāahaṃ Tathā Kuru Dayāṃ Mayi ||³³

Sītā, lost in utter grief, requests Hanumān to mercifully arrange to revive her limbs weighed down by grief with the touch of Rāmā's personality. Rāma is like an uncontrolled tiger who does what he thinks. Sītā points to Hanumān her limbs, faded like blighted crops, and prays for the touch of Rāma to rejuvenate her faded body. Though Rāma is powerful, he delayed his action. So she requests Hanumān to help her. Like Sītā, Parāṅkusa Nāyaki

requests bees to arrange to bring the Lord to her, with their persuading message.²³

6.. Graceful looks of the Lord:

In the verse, 'Vaṇṇam', the Nāyaki's maid wanted to console her in her state of sorrow in separation from her Lord, by blaming Him with cruel words.³⁴ The Nāyaki impatiently told her that even then His eyes were dwelling in her heart and her eyes and that she should not blame the Lord, ever loving and ever present with her. His eyes are reddish because of His love-passion for her. Nampillai here gives this explanation for the Lord's eyes as seen by the Nāyaki, for the Lord's eyes being reddish. He further says that the Lord's eyes are reddish on account of the loving looks of the residents of Valkuṇṭam on them. His eyes constitute 'the food for their hunger, beverage for their thirst and their betwixt-chewed of pleasure'. His eyes are cool with love and tender like the pond where the lotuses blossom. He is Śrīyappati, who abides in the words of His devotees.³⁵

7.. Lord only becoming the means:

In the verse 'Īnaccol', the Nāyaki reveals to her friend-maid her love for Him casting off her reserve.³⁶

Nampillai says that we do not know when the Āzvār felt distressed so much and decided to break open the news to others to get their help. Parallels are discussed by the commentator from the Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa and examples are also given of the absorption of Ācāryās in Bhagavat Viṣayaṃ.³⁷ Bharata was acutely distressed on hearing about Rāmā's going away to the forest. At that time, Kauśalya says:

*Putra Vyādhlina Tē Kacciccharīraṃ Paribādhatē |

Asya Rājakulasyādya Tvadadhīnaṃ Hi Jīvitam ||³⁸

which means 'the capital city looks forward to you only for its living; Daśaratha is dead; Rāma left for forest; we are here since you are here with us; If Rāma notices distress in your face, he will come back - with that hope we are surviving; If he knows that Bharata is not there, he will not look at this side'. Bharata is beside him - self-like Parāṅkusa Nāyaki. Nampillai also mentions Nammāzvār's sorrowful tears recollecting Kṛṣṇā's being tied to a mortar in Tiruvāymoḻi 1.1.3. We are then told of other great bhaktas too³⁹

When Kūrattāzvār was lecturing on Tiruvāymoḻi and Nammāzvār's over-flowing God love, Pillai Uṇṅkāvilī Dāsar shed tears on hearing the Lord's Paratva and Saubhaya and broke down for some

time. Having seen this, Āzvāṇ praisd him for his totally losing himself in the love of the Lord of auspicious attributes even as he was discoursing about Him. Piḷḷai Uṟāṅkāvīḷḷi Dāsar was a person ever absorbed in Bhagavat Viṣayam.

One day Kiṭāmbi Āccāṇ delayed coming to Rāmānuja who asked him the reason. Āccāṇ told him that he was studying Tiruvāymoḻi at the feet of Āzvāṇ. To explain further, Āccāṇ said that Āzvāṇ was explaining the decad of Piṟantavāṟum in Tiruvāymoḻi. Rāmānujā asked him about the way Āzvāṇ explained the poem and his response to it. Āccāṇ replied that Āzvāṇ recited the hymn repeating the lines and shed tears for a long time, saying: 'He is the one incomparable Āzvār!'. He told his students that day they would stop the class and wait; The Āzvār's ecstatic state of God-love was beyond them. Rāmānuja was greatly moved and exclaimed: 'Hay! Āzvāṇ may be Parama Cētanani!'. Further Nampḷḷai explicates the mystical suggestion of this verse, Parāṅkusa Nāyaki reveals her firmness in thinking of the Lord alone as the Means of Liberation. Only the Samsārīs who are not interested in the Lord, think of their survival, enjoying worldly objects. She takes refuge solely with the Lord, who saved the world by incarnating Himself as a Boar,

like a mother who jumps into the well to rescue her child who happens to slip into it.

8. Similarity with clouds:

When yearning for the Lord, the Nayaki sees the clouds that are similar to Him and asks them how they could get their blissful similarity with the divine body of the Lord. But the clouds do not answer her queries. She feels that the clouds without any recompense shower waters carried by themselves and protects living beings. This is in the hymn 'Megangalo'⁴⁰ Nampillai points out that the form of the cloud, which is about to embrace the streak of lightning is like that of the Lord whose form is associated with that of His Consort. Unlike Parāṅkuśa Nāyaki, the clouds attain their proper form by joining the streaks of lightning. On seeing the similarity of the clouds with the Lord, the Nayaki cannot bear the Lord's separation from her. Like Gajēndraāzvāṇ who raised his voice that echoed in Vaikunṭham, she called loudly on the far away clouds.⁴¹ Such is the keenness of Parankusa Nayaki's mystic love for God.

I have confined myself only to the few hymns now explained and there are more hymns where Nayaki's passion and sorrow are finely set out.

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THE DOCTRINE OF BHAKTĪ IN VĒDĀRTHA SAṄGRAHA OF ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJA

ORIGIN OF BHAKTI

Since the dawn of history, man has been experiencing the pleasure and pains according to his actions. In the age of Upaniṣads, with a view to eradicate the sufferings, man began to pray the nature and Impersonal God. Later, the Upaniṣadic doctrine of Impersonal God was fused with the devotional worship of a personal God and beginning was thus made which led to almost revolutionary changes.¹ The outburst of these revolutionary changes brought to the three religions i.e. Jainism, Buddhism and Bhāgavata Religion. The Bhāgavata Religion substituted a personal God called Hari in place of the abstract idea of a universal soul. It stressed that bhakti is the only means to attain Him. According to Liṅga Purāṇa, 'Dhyāna with devotion is called Bhakti'.² Bhaj is the root word for Bhakti, which means 'Cēvai' i.e. service to God.³ Hence, the elite used to say the highest service to God, in the word of Bhakti.²

Since the dawn of the fourth century, there was a great upsurge to two great theistic systems, Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. The great feature of pure devotional element flourished with the emergence

of Āzvārs and Nāyaṇmārs. Āzvārs, twelve in number, propagated the doctrine of Bhakti in their hymns through monothelism. The path of devotion, in which meditation is a constant factor, is possible only to people of high attainments. Hence, Āzvārs advocated self-surrender (prapatti) is an easy way to attain Him.

Since the beginning of the 9th century, with the advent of Śrīvaṣṇava Ācāryās, the philosophy of Viśiṣṭādvaita school was systematised and simplified by analysing the ancient scriptures and Āzvārs' hymns. Yāmunācārya clearly laid down the doctrine which was later elaborated by Śrī Rāmānuja in his works in exhaustive manner. The Vēdārtha Saṅgraha is the first text wherein Śrī Rāmānuja eloquently established the doctrine of Bhakti.

GREATNESS OF VĒDĀRTHA SAṄGRAHA

The Vēdārtha Saṅgraha is a memorable gem among the nine immortal works of Śrī Rāmānuja. Buitenen observes that the Vēdārtha Saṅgraha was Śrī Rāmānuja's philosophical debut.⁴ A great commentator of Vēdārtha Saṅgraha, Sudarśanasūri begins his gloss with a statement that this was a lecture delivered or read out in the presence of the

most learned and impartial listeners of those days, on the Holy seven Hills of Lord Śrīnivāsa of Tirumalai and with Him presiding over that function.⁵ M.R.Rajagopala Iyengar observes that the Vēdārtha Saṅgraha, which was written before Śrī Bhāṣya and which is referred to in the later work, may be considered primarily as dissertation on the Viśiṣṭādvaita doctrine to show that it is more in keeping with the spirit of the Vēdās or Śrutīs than Advaita or Bhēdābhēda.⁶

Beginning the text with a maṅgala ślōka, Śrī Rāmānuja paid homage to the Principal to whom all spiritual and non-spiritual entitles are accessory; who reposes on Śēṣa, and who is the treasury of immaculate and infinite beautiful qualities of Viṣṇu.⁷ Here Rāmānuja implies the bhakti marga by offering adoration to Viṣṇu in a subtle word 'Viṣṇavē Namaḥ'. By his adoration, he suggests us the means of attaining Brahman. As ruled out by Sanskrit critics, the elaboration of the maṅgala ślōka is pervaded all through the text. After paying homage to his Ācārya, Yāmunācārya, in the second ślōka, Śrī Rāmānuja states that Upaniṣads, whose aim is to impart knowledge on meditation, adoration, obeisance etc., of the two feet of the Supreme Being done with intense love are the means of

attaining Him.⁸ In the course of the text, Śrī Rāmānuja explains the above statement.

THE DOCTRINE OF BHAKTI

From the study of Vēdārtha Saṅgraha, the doctrine of bhakti may be classified under the following aspects:

(a) The nature of bhakti and bhakti as a means of liberation; (b) Description of bhakti as an apex-form of love consciousness; (c) Discussion of the beatitude of this absolute love; (d) Subservience does not exclude beatitude; and (e) Bhakti as a means to see the Beatific Vision of God.

(a) THE NATURE OF BHAKTI AND BHAKTI AS A MEANS OF LIBERATION

Śrī Rāmānuja, in the course of his lecture explaining the doubts on the servitude of soul to God, further states that bhakti is a means of liberation. He elaborately explains the nature of bhakti and its role as a means of liberation.⁹ That means one who does good things without expecting any benefit, his sins done in the earlier births will be wiped out. That person will acquire freedom from worldly attachment and bhakti towards God. He will do anga prapatti (ancillary to bhakti) at the feet

of God as stated in Bhagavat Gīta.¹⁰ In other words to attain Mōkṣa without any obstacle, anga prapatti is being done at the feet of God. By doing this anga prapatti, he will get God's love. This devotion leads him to take refuge at the feet of learned Ācārya. Then he will hear his upadēśa or preaching. The knowledge which he gets from that Ācārya is a profound wisdom. By this knowledge, the Śāstra Jñāna or knowledge in Śāstras which he learned already and to be learned will be observed clearly. Then he will never have any doubt or bewilderment. Thus he will engross to know about the true nature of his soul, like sāma,¹¹ Dāma,¹² Tapas,¹³ Śauca,¹⁴ Kṣamā,¹⁵ Ārjava,¹⁶ Bhayasthāna Vivēka¹⁷ ,Abhayasthāna Vivēka¹⁸ Dayā,¹⁹ Ahimsa,²⁰ etc. will be acquired and nourishes them by exercising them daily. All these qualities of a soul will be gained for those who with confidence knows the meanings of Śāstras under the learned Ācārya. Such a trained person will give up the karmās or actions that have to be forbidden as stated in Śāstras. Further Śrī Rāmānuja states that the trained person will do the daily duties (nitya) and occasional or periodical rites (Naimityaka Dharma) with the aim of performing aradhana to God.²¹ This will raise his firmness in mind. He will surrender all his things at the sacred feet of

God and prays as follows: "Myself and all my things do not belong to me; all these are Yours; by safeguarding these, You will enjoy the benefit and not I". Śrī Rāmānuja further enlightens this with these words.²² That means - by practicing this kind of means of liberation, bhakti flourishes further; having developed bhakti in such a state, those persons will always pray God; reciting the attributes of God; always think of God; worship Him and prostrate Him; gain the pleasure by establishing garden etc. for the God; and by repeating God's name, hearing God's attributes and preaching to others, they will presume that they derived the benefit. Having influenced by that bhakti, God will be pleased and graciously appear before that person. By God's grace, the darkness of rajō guṇa (the quality of passion) and tamō guṇa (the subtle quality of darkness or ignorance manifested in anger, sleep etc.) that are existing since his birth will be perished. The love of light will be filled in that mind. With such spotless mind, the trained souls will continuously meditate the Divyātma Svarūpa of God. This is called intense contemplation of God or identifying oneself with Him-samadhi. The continuous incantations of Divyātma Svarūpa, he will have lucid perception of Supreme Person that is called highest bhakti or para

bhakti. In other words, the highest bhakti which is emerged after Dhyāna combined with devotion enables one to have highest degree of lucid perception that is called para bhakti.

Rāmānuja quotes the verses of great spiritual Guru Yāmunācārya as follows: "Ubhayaparīkarmīta svāntasyaikāntikātyantika bhaktiyōgā labhyaḥ".²³ That means ".....by someone whose inner faculty has been prepared by karma yōgā and jñāna yōga". Karma yōga is inevitable for bhakti. This is clearly stated in Īśāvāsōpaniṣad.²⁴ That means: He who knows both vidya and avidya, overcomes his sins by avidya and attains Immortality by vidya. It is clearly known that those Upāsaka who has clear insight in vidya of Brahmōpāsana and the avidya or karma will not expect the benefit and by doing daily rites for the sake as ārādhana to God, he will conquer the death by avidya and gain the Immortality by vidya.

Explaining the śruti, Rāmānuja shows the meaning for avidya which is other than vidya as the actions of varṇasrama dharma i.e. performance of rites and duties ordained for each caste and stage of life. The word vidya means meditation which has reached the form of devotion or bhakti.²⁵ This stage is called Brahmōpasana.

Śrī Rāmānuja further narrates that bhakti, which is freedom from selfish desire (Niṣkāmaya) is the only means to attain God. In Puruṣasūkta, it is said that He who meditates on Him in this manner attains immortality. There is no other way of salvation (Mōkṣa).²⁶ In the Taittirīyōpaniṣad, it is said that those who meditate on Brahman becomes immortal.²⁷ Taittirīya Āraṇyaka says that the person who meditates on Brahman attains the Supreme and he who meditates on Brahman becomes Brahman.²⁸ In all the above three sentences, Rāmānuja feels that the word 'Vēdana' means 'meditation', as the nature of this meditation is described in Brahadāraṇyakōpaniṣad as 'Nidhidhyāsītavyaḥ' which means 'should be meditated upon', a name common to all. But 'Dhyāna' means a form of knowledge. In the Muṇḍakōpaniṣad, it is said that He can only be grasped by meditation that takes the form of Bhakti, not merely by knowing.²⁹ Hence, all these Upaniṣadic verses command Dhyāna only.

Further, Rāmānuja clarifies the doubt that accepting the meaning of 'Vēdana' as 'Dhyāna'. Dhyāna is a means and not bhakti, by explaining the Muṇḍakōpaniṣad verse as follows: This Supreme Being cannot be attained by mere reflection (Manana) nor by mere meditation (Mēdha) nor by

listening to the manifold scriptures. Only He whom The Supreme Being chooses - only by Him can It be attained. To him alone, the Supreme Being reveals His form (Svarūpa).³⁰

It may be noted that when other śrutis command for hearing, meditation and dhyānā, this Śruti is forbidding. But Rāmānujā says that the true meaning for this śruti is not like that. Dhyāna with devotion leads a means for liberation. Dhyāna admixture with devotion is called bhakti. Although the first line of the above śruti means that He is not to be reached by hearing, meditation and dhyāna, the second line gives the meaning that He who desires a person that person will reach Him.

This can be explained with the worldly experience, that is he who likes another person, that person likes him. Likewise, if the man desirous and who is qualified by meditation and who performs the meditation in a spirit of boundless love to the Lord only then does he become capable of attaining the Lord.³¹ Hence, with the boundless love, dhyāna is to be done. Dhyāna admixture with devotion is called bhakti yōga. This only helps a person to attain Him. In the Bhagavat Gītā, it is said that the Supreme person can be attained only exclusive devotion³² Further Lord Kṛṣṇa said: "By

exclusive bhakti O Arjuna, can I be known and beheld and entered so as I really am.³³ When a person knows through bhakti for what I am and who I am in reality, then he knows Me hereby in reality and he enters Me immediately".³⁴

Śrī Rāmānuja while explaining the meaning for the above Gīta Vākya, he opines that bhakti means 'parama bhakti' i.e. unsurpassed love in which there is no expectation of any reward other than itself and which generates a dislike for all other things.³⁵ Those who has this kind of devotion is capable of being chosen by the Lord and of attaining Him. This kind of supreme devotion or parama bhakti which is a special form of knowledge awakens only from bhakti yōga which in turn results from karma yōga i.e. the performance of daily and periodical rites and duties in absolute detachment in the spirit of service to God. In Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said that there is no other way of pleasing Him than worshipping Him by performing daily duties and rites according to his caste or varna and his stage of life or asrama.³⁶ In other words, performing the daily duties and rites according to his caste or stage of life in ancillary to the knowledge which is the cause of God's grace or love. Then it is declared that by performing our daily duties and rites, all will attain Him. By this means,

karma or action is the means of liberation. Śrī Rāmānuja clarifies thus: "yatōdita kramapariṇa tē bhakti ēka labhyaha iti". That means: He can be attained only by devotion which has gradually developed in strength, in accordance with what has been said before".³⁷

(b) DESCRIPTION OF BHAKTI AS AN APEX-FORM OF LOVE CONSCIOUSNESS

At the end of the text after explaining the nature of Brahman, Śrī Rāmānuja recapitulates the doctrine of bhakti as follows:

Bhakti is a means to attain Brahman. To acquire that bhakti one has to obtain the tatva jñānā or true knowledge as explained in sāstrās. Then one has to practice the dharmas according to caste and stage of life with a knowledge of the truths obtained from the sāstrās. By this action, mind will purify. Then by practicing bhakti yōga, a special form of devotion will be developed. This results the vivid perception (Pratyakṣa) of the Supreme. This kind of devotion combined with bhakti is called the supreme devotion or para bhakti. This is the beginning stage of reaching the God. This kind of love is called bhakti. Śrī Rāmānuja referred this love as a form of jñāna or knowledge - Bhaktisca Jñāna

Viśeṣaḥ. Even the sāstrās which speak about jñāna or knowledge as the means to attain Mōkṣa is known as the knowledge based devotion.

Śrī Rāmānuja clears the doubt on the usage of love as jñāna. In the world, It is presumed that pleasure (Sukha) and love (Prīti) as synonymous terms. Vaiśeṣika says that pleasure is a term which is the effect of jñāna. A particular kind of knowledge which grasps a particular object and from that form of knowledge emerges pleasure (sukha). That jñāna or knowledge is the cause. The action of that jñāna or knowledge is pleasure. According to Vaiśeṣikās, jñāna and pleasure are different forms. Pleasure and love are one and the same. Here Rāmānuja raises an objection that since love is different from jñāna, how can that jñāna be called jñāna. Śrī Rāmānuja succinctly gives a reply to this. A particular knowledge that grasps the objects are in three types: (a) If the knowledge particularised by a particular object excites pleasure, it is held dear accordingly. (b) If the knowledge particularised by a particular object excites suffering, it is held dear accordingly. (c) If the knowledge particularised by a particular object excites neither pleasure nor pains, it is in a central condition.

The special characters that are emerged from jñāna or knowledge is based on the object that are grasped by knowledge. Hence, the jñāna which grasps good objects is called pleasure and jñāna which grasps the bad objects called suffering. Vaiśeṣikās accept the pleasure and sufferings from this knowledge. They won't accept all types of knowledge. If pleasure produces from all knowledge, wood or small stone etc. that must also gives pleasure. But we cannot get pleasure from these. From the knowledge of an object like flower, sandalwood etc. one can attain pleasure. It is of the view by Vaiśeṣika that from the knowledge characterised by a certain kind of objects like serpent, pain will be derived. At this sage, Viśiṣṭādvaita accepts the sayings of Vaiśeṣika that pleasure derived from the knowledge which is characterised by an object. The cognition of a particular object produces pleasure (sukha). That sukha or pleasure is not static and only limited.

(c) DISCUSSION OF THE BEATITUDE OF THE ABSOLUTE LOVE:

In the case of Brahman, this jñāna which is of the nature of pleasure is boundless and constant. Here Rāmānuja says that according to Śruti 'Ānandaṃ

Brahma' which means Brahman is bliss.³⁸ Jñāna is dependent on objects. Therefore, this Jñāna characterised by a certain kind of object, one can explain whatever is the means by the word sukha or pleasure. Hence, there is no need to assume an additional entity called pleasure. The cognition on particular objects are pleasure themselves and there is no difference as pleasure and love are synonymous and hence love is kind of Jñāna or knowledge. The knowledge is pleasurable, if the objects are pleasurable. Brahman is pleasurable as such. To make it clear, Rāmānuja lucidly explains the same from the verses of Taittiriyaopaniṣad: 'He is indeed rasa (delight) and the soul having attained Him becomes blissful'.³⁹ In other words, Brahman being pleasure, one is happy when one has attained Brahman. The soul that has attained Brahman becomes delighted or blissful. Brahman is entirely different from the objects of the world. The objects, being experienced in this world, are without inherent power of action called as inert (jada). The cognition of these inert objects may give pleasure for the experiencer but they cannot gain any pleasure, as they are inert. But, the Supreme Person, being in his own right and of his own accord, boundless and absolute bliss, becomes cause of bliss to Bhaktās

and Muktās as well. Since Brahman is a special form of delight (sukha), the person who knows Brahman becomes delighted. This Brahman is the highest tatva; hosts of immeasurable beautiful qualities; faultless; he owns endless and supreme glory (Vibhūti). Such is the supremacy of Brahman which is outpoured. Such a Brahman who possess an infinite supreme manifestation ocean of immeasurable and absolute goodness. Such a Brahman leads sentient and non-sentient beings to Him.⁴⁰

(d) SUBSERVIENT DOES NOT EXCLUDE BEATITUDE;

If a person meditated upon as one for whose purposes the soul is subservient to Supreme Brahman, who became the object of boundless and wonderful to love to the soul. Then soul realises that he is subservient to Supreme and that Supreme is the Lord or Svāmi. A person will be happy when he knows the inseparable servitude to God all the time. All his services are based on Karma, Jñāna and bhakti Yōgās. Then the Supreme will lead the soul to Himself by uplifting him from birth and in all places and in all times and in all stages, he will be given the all type of services to God. Knowing his service to God, the soul is happy to do service for

the beaming smile and pleasure of Supreme.⁴¹

(e) BHAKTI AS A MEANS TO SEE THE BEATIFIC VISION OF GOD:

It may be asked that what has been said would mean that the soul's absolute subservient itself is immeasurable and unsurpassed pleasure. But this is entirely different from the world experience. For all beings of the world, independence is desirable which is pleasurable and subservient to others is painful. The Manu Smṛiti also says that all dependence means suffering and independency leads to pleasure and this is the short note on pleasure and pain and Manu further says that service to others has been described as dog's life and so try to avoid it.⁴² This attitude discloses the misconception of those who immerses with the oneness of body and soul and not aware that the soul is essentially different from body. Śrī Rāmānuja called this stage as 'abhimāna'. He explains the stage with the following words: The word 'body' refers to a mass (of flesh) characterised by a genus such as humans and qualities such as belong to humans. The person who is in saṁsāra thinks that the body is the 'I'. This conception came because of bewilderment. In reality, body is also a bondage of

servitude of God. Since the body servitude to God who is not seen by eyes, the misconception of identification of body and soul is derived in the minds of the people.⁴³

Śrī Rāmānuja underlines that knowledge which has risen to the superior bhakti that is really the means of attaining the God by quoting from ancient texts.⁴⁴ It is to be noted that Śrī Rāmānuja while concluding the text quoted a version from Mōkṣa Dharma of Bhagavān Dvalpāyana (Vyāsa) which is a commentary for all Upaniṣads:

"He (Brahman) does not appear before our sight and no one can see Him with his eyes. He who has attained peace of mind by his firmness (Dhṛti) sees Brahman, who is of the nature of jñāna by his devotion (bhakti)."⁴⁵

It is known from the above commentary that discipline (Dhṛti) is also a means for liberation. But this is wrong as in Vēdānta, bhakti is the only means for Mōkṣa. So, Śrī Rāmānuja appropriately construed the ślōka to arrive at the above proper meaning and said as follows: The meaning is that he who has attained mental peace by his firmness of discipline will see Puruṣōttama by his bhakti or devotion. It means the same as the sentence, 'By exclusive devotion He can be attained - Bhaktiya

Tvaananya Śākya'.

In this way Śrī Rāmānuja established the doctrine of bhakti, a form of knowledge, which is a means of liberation.

Notes and References

1. *The cultural heritage of India, vol.IV, p.38.*
2. *Linga Purāṇā Uttara Bhaga.*
3. *Yamunacharya's Stotaratna commentary p.242.*
4. *Vēdārtha Sangraha Introduction by J.A.B. Van Buitenen, p.30.*
5. *Vēdārtha Sangraha Introduction by K.S.Narayanachar, ASR edition, p.xii.*
6. *ibid. Introduction by M.R.Rajagopala Iyengar, p. 1.*
7. *ibid. Buitenen, p.183.*
8. *ibid. M.R.Rajagopala Iyengar, p.38.*
9. *Sōayam Parabrahmabhūtaḥ
Puruṣōttamaḥ.....Bhaktiyōga Labhyaḥ v.s.P. 126*
10. *Bhagavat Gita 7. 14.*
11. *Quietism;*
12. *restraint of Jñānēndriyaḥ.*
13. *purifying by doing religious austerities like krusram, chandrayanam etc.*
14. *purifying with mind,tongue and body;*
15. *Nature of sustaining the difficulties;*
16. *Straightforwardness;*
17. *to be afraid of irreverence to Bhagvan and Bhagavatas;*
18. *self confidence on the validity of thinking that Narayana is the only protector, noone else.*
19. *unbearable on seeing others' difficulties and dispel their*

- difficulties without expecting any benefit.*
20. *not to be cause for other difficulties.*
21. *Vēdārtha Sangraha p.291 (Tamil translation).*
22. *Ibid. p.291-292.*
23. *ibid. p.295.*
24. *Is.Up. Vidyām Cāvidyām Ca Yastadvēdōbhayaṃ Saha
Avidyayā Mṛtyaṃ Tītvā Vidyayāmṛtamaśnutē ||*
25. *V.S. p.295.*
26. *Purusha Sukta: Tamēvaṃ Vidvān Amṛta Iha Bhavati
Nānyaḥ Pantā Ayanāya Vidyatē*
27. *T.U.: Ya enam viduh amṛitas to bhavati.*
28. *T.A. 3.1.13: Brahma Vidāpnōti Param Brahma Vēdā
Brahmaiva Bhavati*
29. *V.S. p.298.*
30. *Mundakopanishad 3.2.3:*
*Nāyamātmā Pravacanēna Labhyō Na Mēdhyā
Na Bahunā Śrutēna Yam Ēvaiṣa Tēna Labhyā
Tasyaiṣa Ātmā Vṛṇṇutē Tanum Svām'.*
31. *V.S.(MRR) p.136.*
32. *Bhagavat Gita 8.22.*
33. *Ibid. 11.54.*
34. *Ibid. 18.55.*
35. *V.S. p.300 Sakalētara Vaitruṣṇya Āvahaṃ*
36. *Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇā 3.8.6.*
37. *VS.(MRR) p.137.*
38. *Taitt.Up.3.6 Ānandō Brahma.*
39. *ibid.2.7: Rasō Val Saḥ Rasō Val Ēvāyaṃ
Labhdvānandī Bhavati.*
40. *V.S.(MRR) p.215.*
41. *Ibid.p.500..*

42. *Manusmṛiti* 6. 160. *Sarvaṃ Paravaṣaṃ Dukkaṃ. M.S.6.4.*

43. *V.S.p.502.*

44. *Ibid. p. 503.*

45. *Ibid.p. 503.*

ŚARAṆĀGATI IN ŚRĪ RĀMĀNUJA'S ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVA SAMPRĀDĀYA (VIŚIṢṬĀDVAITA)

The origin of Śaraṇāgati is to be traced to Vēdās and its development to Upaniṣads, Itihāsās, Purāṇās, Ālṅkāra hymns and Ācāryās' rahasyās. It was Śrī Rāmānuja who popularised this doctrine to reach the common people, whereas Pillai Lōkācārya systematised and enriched the doctrine. Later Manavāḷa Māmunigaḷ more flexibly analysed it. Hence, it is necessary to know from the following pages the definition of Śaraṇāgati, origin of Śaraṇāgati, development of Śaraṇāgati and the doctrine of Śaraṇāgati.

Definition of Śaraṇāgati:

'Śaraṇāgati', a Sanskrit word, means 'gone to take refuge', in which 'Śaraṇam' means 'Upāya' (means), Graha (house) and rakṣita (protector) as stated in AhirbudhanyaSamhita. 'Śaraṇāgati' is also called Nyasa Vidya, Prapatti, Upayatvaprarthana, Bhāraṇyāsa, Sadhyā Bhakti and so on. Śaraṇāgati is a kind of perception in praying the Lord as a means, as one is sinful and cannot be able to retrieve by other means. This must be in a matter of God.² Viśvaksēna Samhita says that one is not able to accomplish his wishes, by

mere faith (mahāviśva) to surrender before Lord as a means is called Prapatti or Śaraṇāgati.³ Śvētasvatara Upaniṣad says that the Lord who created Brahmā and delivered him the Vēdās, that Lord who lightened one's intellect is a refugee to attain Mōkṣa.⁴ It shows the necessity of Śaraṇāgati for the redemption of the soul. In this way several texts defined Śaraṇāgati.

Origin of Śaraṇāgati :

There were few occasions in which Prahlada, Gajēndra, Aṃbarīṣa, Sugrīva, Vibhīṣaṇa in Rāmāyaṇa, Draupati, Dharmaputra and others in Kṛṣṇāvatāra were benefitted by doing Śaraṇāgati in the earlier Yugas.

With a view to liberating the people from the bondage of life and death i.e., Saṃsāra, the Lord, Himself, preached the three Rahasyās (Secrets) i.e., Tirumantra,⁵ Dvaya⁶ and Carma ślōka⁷ which are the prime tools of Śaraṇāgati and propagated through Āḷvārs. Āḷvārs, twelve in number, were intoxicated in the love of God and highlighted the necessity of Śaraṇāgati in their hymns. To show an example, Nammāḷvār, the foremost among the Āḷvārs, did Śaraṇāgati at the lotus feet of Lord Vēṅkaṭēśvara in his Prabandham Tiruvāymozhi⁸

Following the foot print of Āḷvārs, Ācāryās beginning from Śrīman Nāthamuniḡaḷ down to Manavāḷa Māmunigal propagated the Śaraṇāgatividya.

Development of Śaraṇāgati:

Yamunācārya, grand son of Śrīman Nāthamuniḡaḷ, explicitly did Śaraṇāgati at the feet of Lord in Stōtrarātna by saying that he has not practiced Karma Yōga; neither possessed Ātmajñāna nor devotion at His holy feet; and he has no means or no other way except His feet as a means.⁹

With a view to propagating Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, Yamunācārya prayed at the feet of Lord Varadarāja of Kanchi that Śrī Rāmānuja is to be blessed to be the edifying force and champion for the cause of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.¹⁰

It was Lord Varadarāja who cleared doubts raised by Śrī Rāmānuja and said 'Mōkṣōpāya Prapatti Śyāt' which means that total surrender is the means of liberation and another important verse is 'Pūrṇayaṁ Tu Samasraye' which means that Rāmānuja should resort to Ācārya Periya Nambi as his spiritual guide.¹¹ This shows the necessity of Ācārya's guidance for doing Śaraṇāgati.

It is said in Guruparampara Prabhavam that Lord Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgaṃ has given the wealth of Ubhaya Vibhūdhi (this world and Paramapada) to Śrī Rāmānūja and his disciples and ordered him to reign them, when he prostrated before Lord, after taking sainthood.¹²

Śrī Rāmānuja, in his first text Vēdārtha Saṅgraha, says that the release of the soul from the birth in the form of its natural conjunction with Prakṛti, which is due to Karma and consists in various gunas is impossible without resorting to the Lord.¹³

Although Śrī Rāmānuja was faithful to śāstrās, with a view to conquering the kudruṣṭīs, he wrote Śrī Bhāṣya and other seven texts by hiding Prapatti vidya which is to be received from an Ācārya's grace and explicitly propagated Bhakti in those texts. But by showing his desire and faith on Śaraṇāgati, he expressed his self-surrender in Śaraṇāgati Gadya.

Actually Śaraṇāgati is more prominent than Bhakti, as Bhakti is restricted to only to first three Varṇās. Śaraṇāgati is for all irrespective of caste, creed, place, gender, and so on; Bhakti is difficult to practice; this is easy to do with faith; the fruition is delayed in Bhaktiyōga; here, the fruition is quick i.e.,

in the present life itself; In Bhaktiyōga there are so many restrictions; here it is not so; that is practicable; this is accomplished; the practice of Bhaktiyoga is against the nature of soul; this is akin to the nature of soul which is always subservient to God. Such differences throw light on the supermacy of Śaraṇāgati.

Hence, Rāmānuja in Śaraṇāgati Gadya in the first section expresses his surrender at the feet of Periya Pirāṭṭiyār (Mahālakṣmi) after extolling her greatness, and qualities, and requested Her that his surrender at the feet of Lord be made appropriate and successful.¹⁴ Further he reiterates his surrender by renouncing father, mother, wife, children, relatives and all desires as said in Purāṇās showing respect for the words of Ṛṣis.¹⁵ Conveying the formal surrender, he chanted Dvayamantra. He seeks that he shall be blessed with the consequential experience of the Lord and yearning for service unto Him. In reply, the Lord through an inner voice conveyed that he will be totally rid of worldly misery and will spend the rest of his life in chanting the Dvaya mantra and meditating on its import.¹⁶ Next to Rāmānuja, Ācāryas Embar, Pillan, Nañjīyār, Nāmpillai, Periya Vāccanan Pillai, Vādhikēsari Aḷagiyā Manavāḷa Jīyar and host of

others were faithfully surrendered themselves to Rāmānuja who is the sole protector of all, as ordained by Lord Raṅganātha.

Until the emergence of Piḷḷai Lōkācārya, a star of the first magnitude in the galaxy of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava divine of 13th century, there was no necessity to explain the doctrine of Śaraṇāgati till his period as every Ācārya who were prapannas had faith in their Ācāryās and practiced Śaraṇāgati according to their Ācārya's upadēśa.

It was Piḷḷai Lōkācārya who has taken full lead in explaining the nature and doctrine of Śaraṇāgati in his 18 works called Aṣṭādaśa Rahasya,¹⁷ by restricting Śaraṇāgati for those who distressed very much in this mundane life and seek the way for the attainment of Mōkṣa, whom he called Mumukṣu.

Doctrine of Śaraṇāgati :

The doctrine of Śaraṇāgati covers several aspects, of which I am analysing the following. They are : Theme of three Rahasyās, Mahālakṣmi as Puruṣākāra; No restriction to do Śaraṇāgati. Importance of Arca form, Lord as 'means' and 'End', Nature of Prapatti, Greatness of Parāgata Svīkārā, and importance of Ācārya Abhimāna.

Theme of three Rahasyās:

Among the 18 works, Piḷḷai Lōkācārya emphasises the necessity of knowing the theme of three rahasyās for a Prapanna, in his work called Mumukṣupadi. He said that Tirumantra enlightens the soul which is subservient to Śrīman Nārāyaṇa should not claim its individuality; all kainkaryas (services), should be done to the Lord who is a Sarvaśēṣi.¹⁸ This is the prayer for a soul to pray before the Lord and get the unstinted revelation for one's true relationship with God. In Dvaya mantra, the first sentence emphasises that the soul, if it wishes to attain Mōkṣa, has no other means except to prostrate before Śrīman Nārāyaṇa with the recommendation of Mahālakṣmi. The second sentence states that the aspirant has to do kainkarya in the presence of both Śrīman Nārāyaṇa and His consort Mahālakṣmi.¹⁹ In the Carama ślōka, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that to give up all Dharmas or rites unintentionally and surrender to Him alone and he will release him from all sins and grants Mōkṣa.²⁰

With a view to creating awareness among the aspirants who desire to do Śaraṇāgati for attaining Mōkṣa, Lōkācārya succinctly elaborated the three rahasyās in his other works, particularly

Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam and framed concrete doctrines for doing Śaraṇāgati.

Mahālakṣmi as Puruṣākāra :

The essential recommendatory role of Mahālakṣmi, as Puruṣākāra for a prapanna is necessary as she had three essential traits i.e., compassion, subservient to Lord and exclusive dependence on Lord. This is highlighted in the Dvaya mantra first sentence first word 'Śrī'.

No restriction to do Śaraṇāgati:

Pillai Lōkācārya says that there is no pre-condition to do Śaraṇāgati in a particular place, the time, particular type, eligibility, its fruits, but the only thing that matters is where exactly Prapatti should be performed, i.e., the Lord unto whom one should surrender for the accomplishment of one's cherished desire or objective²¹ While explaining the Sūtra Manavāḷa Māmunigaḷ says that Prapatti means taking Lord as refuge. There is no restriction to do Prapatti about the place where it is done; no restriction to do it in a particular season; no exclusion of persons not belonging to the first three castes and there is no restriction in getting particular benefits for a particular sādhana.²²

Importance of Arcā Form:

It requires to do Śaraṇāgati in a place where the ocean of innumerable excellence that exists in Arcā form only,²³ than the Lord's other manifestation i.e., Para, Vyūha, Vibhāva and Antaryāmi Svarūpa.²⁴ It is said that Āḷvārs did Śaraṇāgati in several places only in Arcā form.²⁵

Pillai Lōkācārya reveals the three types of Prapannas who seek the Lord's grace in His Arcā form. They are (i) those who devoid of knowledge to practice other means for experiencing the God called Ājñās; (ii) those who got wisdom (Jñāna) and energy (Śakti) and having known one's real nature of soul i.e., subservient to God and discards other means which are enemies for the nature of Soul called Jñānadhīkas; (iii) those who soaked in God love and in their state of ecstasy could not lift their minds off and steady themselves called bhaktipāravasyās.²⁶ Pillai Lōkācārya, in another sūtra, refers Bhattar's version that Sage Sownaka has referred to these three categories of subjects, as being unaware of any means other than the Lord, who, for them, at once becomes the 'Means' and the 'End'.²⁷

Mahālakṣmi in Lakṣmītantra says that Prapatti is a means for those who are illiterate; for wise

persons; for those who wants to cross the Samsārā in Kaivalyāniṣṭa; and for those who wants to have experience of God's nature, vigraha, attributes etc., and not able to bear in mind without the experience of God.²⁸

Lord as a 'Means' and 'End':

Lōkēcārya further states that if Prapatti is resorted to, as a personal effort of the individual soul and looked upon as a means for securing protection from the Lord, instead of looking upon the Lord as a sole means, the Means and the End rolled into one, it would be just as absurd as a grown up son calling upon his father to sign a written undertaking to take care of the former.²⁹

Usually for Means other than the Lord, the disparity of that means and the 'end' will be many. But in the case of Prapatti there is no such disparity between Means and End both are Lord only. Lōkēcārya rightly explains with an example that it is like beckoning a cow by showing a handful of grass and feeding the same grass when it comes nearer.³⁰ This conveys that the feet of Lord as 'means' and that feet is attainable as an 'end' both combined in one i.e., Lord. There is no difference in the subject, but in the thought.³¹ Since the Lord who is

instrumental for both as 'means' and 'end' there is no meaning for Prapatti, as the gesture of expressing submission before attaining the fruition and after doing Prapatti i.e., the Lord as a Means, will always be with felicity.³²

Nature of Prapatti:

Commenting the nature of Prapatti in a sūtra, Manavāḷa Māmunigaḷ says that there is an inherent risk of Prapatti being included along with other Means i.e., Karma, Jñāna and Bhakti yōgās and looked upon as the means of attaining the Lord, which undoubtedly the other disciplines are. But the distinguishing character of Prapatti, is, that it cannot tolerate its being looked upon as the Means for attaining the Lord.³³ Cautioning against the Prapatti being considered as a Means, Pillai Lōkācārya says that the Lord as the direct means and the sole protector, neither needs nor shelter any external aids. Prapatti is just a conveyor or a mere node and that is why it does not tolerate any other means besides declaiming to consider itself as a means.³⁴ In another sūtra, he enlightens that the basic knowledge of servitude (Ṣṣatva) to God and knowing that He is the protector, and not obstructing the protectiveness of God which means

remaining in a state of passive stir are necessary to get the fruition.³⁵

He further says that if one performs Prapatti to escape from the danger of Saṃsāra by the Grace of God, it means that he will be courting a greater danger.³⁶ Hence he says that the Lord is said to await the desire of the people for protection at His hands as said in Lakṣmītantra that looks for his prayer for protection.³⁷ Although the Lord has always been remembering His property i.e., the sentient beings and thinking of their redemption, all the time, this will not materialise as the individuals were not thinking of Him as their own mentor and protector.³⁸ This will be accomplished when the individual gives up his self effort for protection.³⁹

In another sūtra, Pillai Lōkācārya succinctly describes the usefulness of nature of soul i.e. Śēṣatva (servitude to God) and exclusive dependence on the Lord (Paratantrīya) which are the sole characters for a Prapanna. Elaborating the sūtra, Māmuni says that the individual, being wise and doer of prapatti, should not take any effort in the attainment of Lord. That is the result of Paratantrīya; and the individual being wise and gaining the enjoyment of God's experience as his fruit, must be negated and to create happiness to

Lord, being Śēṣatva. This enlightens Śēṣatva and Paratantrīya are the two traits of the soul.⁴⁰

Lōkācārya establishes that Prapatti is above faults of any kind, as this is the act of true nature of soul i.e., its exclusive dependence on the Lord and this totally freed from the involvement of self-effort⁴¹ He further opines that the mere fact that the individual who had for ages not thought of God, has now turned towards Him and also submitted himself for His protection, makes the Lord to feel more jubilant.⁴²

Lōkācārya explains lucidly two types of Śaraṇāgati. They are Ārtha Prapatti and Dr̥pta Prapatti. One can practice Sastras by the grace of God and can obtain Upadēśa from Ācārya. Then he gets real knowledge. He feels that his body is an obstacle for the experience of God; likewise he feels the place and relationship of Ācārya. Then to have experience of God by seeking the Desa, body and Ācārya quickly, he will perform Śaraṇāgati. Nammālvār in several hymns cross questioned the Lord for not showing His grace to take him away from this world. This is called Ārtha Prapatti. Dr̥pta Prapatti means that, one, to get revelation of God, has to approach a good Ācārya and from his initiation he will seek God as refuge; stage by stage

he will know the nature of God and soul and their relations.⁴³

It is generally believed that after performing Śaraṇāgati, Prapanna has no chance of doing sin knowingly or unknowingly because he is under constant protection and guidance of God. His sole ambition is to be relieved from the bondage of Saṃsāra and get rid of all his sins of the past. But as a general theory as long as the Prapanna lives in the world, he cannot overcome the effects of Prardhakarma. But as a human being he may commit some mistakes. Again doing Śaraṇāgati is objectionable according to Śāstrās. In such a situation, Māmuni explains that for the word 'prapadyē' in the first sentence of Dvaya mantra, he says that Rāma has taken a vow to rescue that one who performs Śaraṇāgati only once and one who shows that he is servitude to Him. He states that one who, by his rājasa and tāmasa guṇās, changes to other means and regrets later for his mistake and performs Śaraṇāgati which was once done, will not be considered more than once and considers it as effluence for continuity of his satva guṇa.⁴⁴

Greatness of Paragata Śvīkāra :

The important aspect of Prapatti as revealed

by Lōkācārya is Paragata Śvīkara which means the Lord seeks the hand of individual even his grave sins will no way obstruct.⁴⁵ But the individual trying to get hold of the Lord, is called Svāgata Śvīkāra. It is a moment in the reverse gear which will misfire, despite all the merits claimed for prapatti.⁴⁶ One can see example for Svāgata Śvīkāra, the Śaraṇāgati performed by Bharata before Rāma imploring him to get back to Ayōdhya. But that was not materialised as Rāmā's thoughts did not coincide with Bharata's trend of thinking. In the case of Paragata Śvīkāra, for example, Śaraṇāgati performed by Guha, a hunter, was voluntarily courted by Rāma and they became friends.⁴⁷ Here Māmuni refers the saying of Kuresa that what that is liked by the Lord is called puṇya; and what that is not liked, pāpa.⁴⁸

Highlighting the greatness of Paragata Śvīkāra, Lōkācārya says that the Lord has two attributes namely compassion for those who seek refuge in Him and spontaneous grace on the individuals whether they deserve it or not. The latter is superior as Lord's independence goes on uninterrupted.⁴⁹ This is well received in the Upaniṣads that this soul cannot be grasped by explication, nor by mere knowledge, nor by great

erudition; he alone whom God Himself elects can attain Him; He singles his soul out to serve as His body⁵⁰ This can be seen when Rāma showered His grace unsolicited on Guha and Hanumān. This is Paragata Śvīkāra.⁵¹

Importance of Ācārya Abhimāna:

Lastly, the characteristic of Prapatti is Ācārya Abhimāna which Lōkācārya gave much importance in several sūtrās in Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam. He says that by approaching God is like one who requests him by holding His hands to get the things done; by approaching an Ācārya is like holding the feet of Ācārya i.e., surrendering him and get the things done definitely. Ācārya helps both God and his disciple. Ācārya helps God by introducing the disciple and his disciple by showing his relationship with Sesi i.e., God⁵² The relationship of God is common to get one into Saṃsāra according to one's Karma and get one as a mukta by showing kindness whereas the relationship of Ācārya is the cause of redeeming from Saṃsāra and to get Mokṣa. The help rendered by God is great, as He enlightens a good Ācārya Abhimāna (Grace will enlighten the disciple). Hence God's help is greater than that of Ācārya⁵³.

He finally establishes that Ācārya Abhimāna (Grace) will enlighten the disciple, the three states of Śēṣatva rūpa (servitude to God), Upāya (God as a Means), and Puruṣārtha (to do Kainkarya to God) as derived from Tirumantra, Piḷḷai Lōkācārya says 'Ācārya Abhimāname uttarakam'.

Apart from Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam, Mumukṣuppaḍi, Navaratnamāla and in other texts, Lōkācārya enumerated the essential characteristics of Prapanna for acquiring Mōkṣa.

To conclude, I wish to say that Piḷḷai Lōkācārya stresses the necessity of Ācāryābhimāna which is like anga for Prapatti and other means and independent. He showed with ease, that Śaraṇāgati is for those who are not able to do Bhakti; Ācārya Abhimāna is for those who are not able to do prapatti.⁵⁵ Ācāryābhimāna, firstly realises an aspirant and carmōpāyā i.e., Ācārya as a means from Bhagavat Ananyārha Śēṣatva i.e., subservient only to God like withered leaf for long years of aloofness and tender leaf sprouting on a stalk; spiritually revitalised soul blossoms into service to God's devotees like a flower yielding fruit. then the love of Ācārya alone, matters in the final analysis of redeeming the soul to do kainkarya⁵⁶. Following Piḷḷai Lōkācārya, Manavāḷa Māmunigaḷ in his text

Upadēśaratnamāla says that Lord along with Mahālakṣmī will grant Vaikuṇṭha for those who approach and acquire the grace of an Ācārya who satisfactorily gained jñāna and anuṣṭāna.⁵⁷

Notes and References

1. *Upāyē Gṛharakṣitrōḥ Śabdaḥ Śaraṇamityayam .
Vartatē Sāmpratam Calṣa Upāyārthalka Vācakaḥ ..
(Ahlrbudanya Samhitā 36.36)*
2. *Ahamasmi Aparādhānām Ālayaḥ Akincaṇō Agatiḥ .
Tvamēvōpāyabhūtō Mē Bhavēti Prārthanāmatih ..
Śaraṇāgatirityuktā Sā Tēvē Asmin Prayujyatām ..
(A.Sa 37.30-31).*
3. *Ananyasādhyē Svābhīṣṭē Mahāviśvāsa Pūrvakam .
Tadēkōpāyatāyāncā Prapattiḥ Śaraṇāgatiḥ .. (VI. Sa)*
4. *Yō Brāhmaṇaṁ Vidadāti Pūrvaṁ Yō Vai
Vēdaṁśca Prahīṇōti Tasmal Tam Ha Dēvaṁ
Ātma Budhdih Prasādaṁ Mumukṣurval
Śaraṇamaham Prapadyē (Śvētāśvatarōpaniṣad 6.13)*
5. *It is said that Śrīman Nārāyaṇa preached Tirumantra
i.e., 'Ōṁ Namō Nārāyaṇāya' to Nara
In Badarikāśramaṁ. This is called Moolamantra
and King of Mantras (Mantrarājan) since this mantra
is secret in nature, it is called Mantrarahasyaṁ.*
6. *Lord Viṣṇu preached Dvayamantra to His
Consort Mahālakṣmī (Perlyā Pirāṭṭi) in Viṣṇu Lōka as follows:
Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Caraṇau Śaraṇaṁ Prapadyē;
Śrīmatē Nārāyaṇāya Namaḥ.
In Pāñcarātra, Dvayamantra is called Mantrarathnam*

23. *ibid* Sūtra 34

24. *ibid* Sūtra 39

Bhūgata Jalampōle Antaryāmitvam (Antaryāmi form is like water underneath the earth which one cannot see); Āvaraṇa Jalampōle Paratvaṃ (para form of god is like water above the world); Pārkaḍalpōlē Vyūhaṃ (Vyūha form is like milky ocean); Perukkāru Pōlē Vibhavaṅga! (Vibhava form is like the rivers once over flowed); Adlle Tēṅḡlna Maḍukka! Pōle Arcāvatāraṃ (archa form is storage of water once over flowed which now spread into 108 Divya Dēśās).

25. *ibid.* Sūtra 35

26. *ibid.* Sūtra 43

27. *ibid.* Sūtra 49

28. *ibid.* Sūtra 50

29. *ibid.* Sūtra 54

30. *ibid.* Sūtra 40 with Manavālamuni commentary p. 125

31. *ibid.* Sūtra 140 with Āye commentary p.. 125

32. *ibid.* Sūtra 141

33. *ibid.* Sūtra 56 to 58 with Māmuni commentary p. 71-72

34. *ibid.* Sūtra 59

35. *ibid.* Sūtra 60

36. *ibid.* Sūtra 62

37. *ibid* Sūtra 63 Lakṣmītantra :

38. *ibid* Sūtra 66

39. *ibid* Sūtra 68

40. *ibid* Sūtra 71 with Māmuni Commentary p. 154

41. *ibid* Sūtra 134

42. *ibid* Sūtra 137

43. *Arthapañcaka* p. 47

44. *Mumukṣuppaḍi Sūtra* 156 with *Māmuni Commentary*
p. 154

45. *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam Sūtra* 143

46. *ibid Sūtra* 142

47. *ibid Sūtras* 144 and 145

48. *ibid Sūtra* 145 with *Māmuni Commentary* p. 127

49. *ibid Sūtra* 148

50. *ibid Sūtra* 149

*Nāyamātmā Pravacanēna Labhyaḥ Na Mēdhayā Na
Bahuna Śṛtēna Yamēvaiṣa Vṛṇutē Tēna Labhyaḥ
Tasyaiṣa Ātma Vivṛṇutē Tanuṃ Svām.*

(Muṇḍakōpaniṣad and Kaṭhōpaniṣad 1.2.23)

51. *Śrīvacanabhūṣaṇam Sūtra* 150

52. *ibid. Sūtras* 427 to 429

53. *ibid. Sūtras* 433 to 436

54. *ibid. Sūtra* 447

55. *ibid. Sūtra* 462

56. *ibid. Sūtra* 463

57. *Jñānaṃ Anuṭṭānanivai Naṇḍrāgavē Vuḍaya*

Nāna Guruvai Aḍaindakkāl - Mānilattīr

Tēnār Kamalaṃ Tirumāmagaḷ Koḷunan

Tānē Valguṇḍaṃ Taruṃ. (Upadēśaratnamāla 61)

TIRUMALAI AṆANTĀZVĀṆ AND ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVISM

Śrī Rāmānuja, a crusader of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, played important role in unearthing the lore of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism through his writings and discourses besides visiting Śrī Vaiṣṇava Divya Dēśās. Following him, a galaxy of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Ācāryās emerged and contributed for the development of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Among them, Aṇantāzvāṇ was a studded gem in the Jewel of disciples. His contribution to Śrī Vaiṣṇavism can be classified as follows: Aṇantāzvāṇ's life, Aṇantāzvāṇ and Śrī Rāmānuja, Aṇantāzvāṇ's service at Tirumala, Aṇantāzvāṇ and Lord Śrīnivāsa, Aṇantāzvāṇ's steadfast bhakti on Lord, Lord Śrīnivāsa's grace on Aṇantāzvāṇ, Aṇantāzvāṇ's Ācāryā bhakti, nature of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Lakṣaṇa, Aṇantāzvāṇ's meaningful interpretation on Āzvārs' hymns.

Śrī Rāmānuja, an aṃśa of Ādiśēṣa, was born to uplift the ignorant people from saṃsārā by teaching Sāstrās through his works. With a view to instructing people by doing kalinkaryā, Śrī Rāmānuja has taken another form as Aṇantāzvāṇ, like Lord Incarnated Himself as Nara and Nārāyaṇa.

In such a way, Aṇantāzvāṇ, an aṃśa of Ādiśēṣa, was born under the Citra star in the Tamil month of Citra in the year Vijaya (1053) in a noble Śrī

Valṣṇava family, at Siruputtur, near Mēlkōṭṭē. Under the care of his father, Kēśavācārya, Aṇantāzvāṇ received traditional education including the Vēdās, Sāstrās and Divya Prabandham.

Śrī Rāmānuja and Aṇantāzvāṇ:

Wishing to become a disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja, Aṇantāzvāṇ along with some others reached Śrīraṅgam and eagerly approached Śrī Rāmānuja who entrusted them to his disciple Aruḷāḷapperumāḷ Emperumāṇār, who was a staunch Advaita ascetic earlier and later became a humble disciple of Śrī Rāmānuja. Aṇantāzvāṇ had Pañca Saṃskāra performed by Aruḷāḷapperumāḷ Emperumāṇār and learnt many a truth as well as daily religious conduct at the holy feet of Śrī Rāmānuja.

On one occasion, Śrī Rāmānuja was giving discourse on Tiruvāymoḻi of Nammāzvār on the decad 'Oḻivil Kālam'. In this decad, while he was explaining the second hymn 'Entaitantaitantai', he said that Tirumala is the place called Puṣpa Maṇṭapam, as told by Āzvār that Immortals of Paramapada sprinkled flowers that remain fresh and it reveals that this place is responsible for the growth of fragrant and unfading flowers. Hence, he asks that somebody in this congregation who

would willingly go to Tirumala and establish a flower garden on the Hill and offer garlands to Lord Śrīnivāsa. Having known for severe cold over the Hill, nobody dared to accept the proposal. Suddenly, Anantāzvēṇ who was amidst the audience, rose up and obediently told that he is ready to carryout flower service to Lord, as he thought it is befitting to fulfill the wishes of his Ācārya in spite of impediments. This is the way that he showed his strong desire in the service. On hearing Anantāzvēṇ's courageous words, Śrī Rāmānuja felt happy and embraced him and conferred the title 'Āṇ Pillai' (The Man)'.

Anantāzvēṇ's service at Tirumala:

Anantāzvēṇ proceeded to Tirumala with his family and he established a flower garden and also a tank. He also built a well to pour water for garden etc.

As per the instruction of Śrī Rāmānuja, Anantāzvēṇ built a Maṇṭapam where he consecrated Yāmunācāryā's Idol and he started weaving beautiful garlands in this Maṇṭapam. This was a place where Yāmunācārya did flower service to Lord Śrīnivāsa, hence Anantāzvēṇ named 'Yamunalthuraivar'. From this place,

Anantāzvēn used to pluck the flowers just before they blossom and wove them into garlands, put them in a basket and by covering his mouth and nose with his upper Uttiriyam for not to have the experience of smelling those flowers before adorning to Lord and then carry them on his head around the Inner Prākāra and offer them to the Lord. At that time Nādasvaram will also accompany him. This is the practice, which is continuing hitherto by Jīyars. In this way, Anantāzvēn was serving and worshipping Lord Śrīnivāsa daily.

Anantāzvēn and Lord Śrīnivāsa:

As said earlier, when Anantāzvēn was devotedly constructing the tank, he sought the help of his pregnant wife and little son. She used to fill in the basket the soil dug by Anantāzvēn. Having noticed her suffering, the merciful Lord appeared before her as a young boy and started carrying the basket on his head from her. Anantāzvēn felt very much for His service, as he would not allow anybody to do service than his own family. Moved by pity, the Lord as a boy continued to serve without letting Anantāzvēn know about this involvement. Having noticed His service, he chased the boy and with

heavy iron crow bar hit on his chin. At the same time, the young boy entered the temple with blood flow in drops from the chin.

When Anantāzṅvān entered into the temple, he was taken to surprise as he noticed the flow of blood from the chin of the Lord. He was frightened for a while and then he realised that the young boy whom he wounded is none but Lord who helped his wife. Regretting his evil action, he prayed the Lord for an excuse. As a first aid, he applied the powdery substance of flowers on the chin. Delighted with Anantāzṅvān's intense attachment to the service, the Lord said that He will consider the worth indelible wound marks as equivalent worth as beautiful mole 'Śrīvatsā' on His chest. He further ordered that the crow bar be displayed at the entrance of the temple for darśan of devotees. Then Anantāzṅvān was honoured.

There was an incident in which Anantāzṅvān became the father of Padmāvatī Tāyār and father-in-law of Lord Śrīnivāsa.

In the disguise of a Prince and Princess, the Lord and His Consort used to pluck flowers in Anantāzṅvān's garden during their visits. One night, Anantāzṅvān caught hold of them, but the Prince escaped. The princess begged him to relieve her

considering her as his daughter. But Anantāzṽān tied her in a nearby Ṣēṇbhaga tree with a plant grown nearby and guarding her whole night inquiring about her family.

The previous night through a human voice, the temple servants ran to the garden and found a Princess tied to the tree. Next day, the priest found the chest jewel of the Lord missing in the temple. Having known the incident of hearing the truth, Anantāzṽān immediately freed her and begged to pardon him. He carried her along with flower basket and reached the temple. The Lord honoured him with a garland which He was adorning and Anantāzṽān offered the girl to the Lord; with miracle She transformed herself into the golden image and adorned the chest of Lord Śrīnivāsā; then the priests recognised him as father of Padmāvati Tāyār and the Lord's father-in-law.

Anantāzṽān's steadfast Bhakti on Lord:

Anantāzṽān's steadfast bhakti on Lord may be seen from the following incident:

When Anantāzṽān was doing service in the garden, a snake bite his hand and he immediately pronounced 'Ēmpērumānār Tiruvaṭṭigalē Śaraṇam' and wiped out the hand with flowers and took bath

In Svāmi Puṣkarīṇī, without taking any medicine for snake bite. He went to the temple. The Lord questioned him about his not taking any medicine for snake bite, to relieve from snake poison. Anantāzṅvāṇ, being an aṃsā of Ādiśēṣa, told that if the snake is powerful, by biting, I will take bath in vraja river and become a servant of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa in Valkuṇṭha, or if he, being an aṃsa of Ādiśēṣa, ~~the~~ due to snake bite, ~~he~~ will take bath in Svāmi Puṣkarīṇī and do service to Lord Śrīnivāsa only. Both ways the happenings will be the same and hence he has not taken any treatment.

On one occasion, Anantāzṅvāṇ was busy in weaving the flower garlands in Yamunātturāi Maṇṭapam. In order to test Anantāzṅvāṇ, the Lord sent for him immediately. He did not care for the call as he was busy making the garlands. Calmly he went to the temple with a basket of garlands and appeared before the Lord. The Lord questioned him for not coming earlier when he called for and if he wants to drive him away what Anantāzṅvāṇ can do. In reply Anantāzṅvāṇ told that he came late as there should not be flower buds blossoming and losing their fragrance, which are to be adorned to Him. He preferred to complete the work and appeared before Him. Anantāzṅvāṇ very much

gave importance to his Ācārya Rāmānuja to do Impeccable kalnkarya by providing fragrant garlands to Lord. Hence, he preferred the order of Ācārya to Lord's. Further Aṇantāzvēṇ told that he is the follower of the footsteps of Madurakavi Āzvēr to whom Nammāzvēr is all God, friend and relatives. Likewise for Aṇantāzvēṇ, Śrī Rāmānuja is all God etc. Noticing Aṇantāzvēṇ's steadfast devotion on his Ācārya, the Lord desired to give something for Aṇantāzvēṇ in token of his devotion. Aṇantāzvēṇ requested Him to serve him uninterruptedly in Tirumala. Pleased with his prayer, the Lord granted him Mōkṣa to whomsoever is associated with him, be it animal or man or bird. Then Aṇantāzvēṇ felt happy for his devotion as that of Madhurakavi. Since then, his associates called servant of Madurakavi or Madurakavi Dāsa.

Aṇantāzvēṇ was building a compound wall and towers for the temple. There was a Ṣēṇbhaga tree which hindered the construction of the wall. He did not want to cut the tree as he recollected the hymn of Kulaśēkara Āzvēr who desired to be born as anything in this Tirumala Hill.. He felt that this Ṣēṇbhaga tree may be a noble soul who wishes association with Tirumala. So he prayed to the Lord to help without any hindrance to the soul like tree.

Next day morning, delighted to see, that the tree was no longer in the way of the wall but moved far away from the original place. Then Anantāzṅvāṇ constructed the wall and that wall then called Ṣēṇbhaga compound wall. In that Prākāra, around the temple, there were number of Ṣēṇbhaga trees flourished later.

Lord Śrīnivāsā's grace on Anantāzṅvāṇ:

Once a group of Śrī Vaiṣṇavās from Śrīraṅgam came to Tirumala. They were tired, hungry and thirsty due to their long journey. With a view to helping them and to give recognition to Anantāzṅvāṇ, the Lord disguised himself as a young Śrī Vaiṣṇava youth and offered with a vessel of tamarind rice to them. Introducing himself as a disciple of Anantāzṅvāṇ, he spontaneously composed the following Tanḡyan:

Akḡilātma Guṇāvāsam Aḡṇānatimīrāpam I

Āśritānām Suśaraṇam Vandē Anantārya Dēśīkam II

(I pay obeisance to Ācārya Anantāzṅvāṇ who is the treasure of all the good qualities of a Śrī Vaiṣṇava who comparatively drives away the darkness of ignorance and is the refuge of the disciples who have sought Him as their Ācārya).

Having noticed that, there is no mention about Śrī Rāmānuja, they doubted about this and inquired further about its originality. Immediately, he again composed another tanlyan which reflects Śrī Rāmānuja's greatness in the following manner:

Śrīmadrāmānujācārya Śrīpādāmbhōruhadvayam ।

Saduttamāṅga Sandhāryaṁ Aṇantāryamaham Bhajē ॥

(I prostrate before Aṇantāzvēṇ who is equal to the feet of Śrī Rāmānuja and who is worshipped by Śrīvaiṣṇavās all over the world).

On reaching Tirumala, the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas went to the residence of Aṇantāzvēṇ and paid their respects to him. They told about his disciple who brought us prasadam on the way and also mentioned about the two tanlyans. Hearing this news, one group of elder hermits felt surprise mixed with admiration and awe and said about the Lord's high regard for Aṇantāzvēṇ. They regarded that hereafter those two tanlyans recited by the Lord in disguise of a boy shall be respectfully considered as invocations in praise of Ācāryā Aṇantāzvēṇ. This reminds the association of Mudallyāṇḍān as Tridanda and the sandals of Śrī Rāmānuja; Kūrattāzvēṇ as Jalapavitra of Śrī Rāmānuja and Aṇantāzvēṇ should be deemed to be the lotus feet of his Ācāryā Śrī Rāmānuja. Thenceforth in Tirumala

Śrī Rāmānujā's Pādukā is called 'Aṇantāzvān', whereas in all other Divya Dēśās it is known as 'Mudallyāṇḍān'.

Aṇantāzvān's Ācāryā bhakti:

At one time, among the four disciples of Śrī Rāmānuja, Ciriyaṇḍān approached him and pleaded that he do not want the miserable life and is on the verge of death and he needs his bliss of salvation. At once Śrī Rāmānuja told him that Lord Śrīnivāsa is the only Lord to grant salvation and he advised him to go to Tirumala and let Aṇantāzvān mediate Lord to get him Mōkṣa. With intense faith on the grace of Lord Śrīnivāsa, Ciriyaṇḍān immediately rushed to Tirumala and with great reverence revealed his purpose and the order of Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja. Noticing Ciriyaṇḍān's feelings and having known the Lord's good qualities and more so Śrī's grace, Aṇantāzvān believed that the Lord will grant this devotee's desire. As suggested by Śrī Rāmānuja, Aṇantāzvān introduced Ciriyaṇḍān in the temple to the Lord and praising His attributes told that he be given salvation as Śrī Rāmānuja ordered to seek refuge in Him. Accordingly, the Lord granted infinite bliss of the highest goal - Paramapada to Ciriyaṇḍān. He was very much

pleased with the gesture of Anantāzvēṇ and immediately attained the bliss of the Lord. It is said that Anantāzvēṇ performed the last rites of Ciriyaṇḍāṇ with great devotion.

Nature of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Lakṣaṇa:

At one time, Ācāryā Bhaṭṭar sent a Śrī Vaiṣṇava to Anantāzvēṇ's house to inquire about Śrī Vaiṣṇava Lakṣaṇa. When he went there, some Śrī Vaiṣṇavas were taking meals and there was no place. He stood aside. Noticing his wait, Anantāzvēṇ called him to take meals together. Then he inquired the purpose and the place from where he is. He said that he was sent by Bhaṭṭar to know about Śrī Vaiṣṇava Lakṣaṇa from him. Immediately he told the answer as follows: 'Śrī Vaiṣṇava will be like crane, be like a cock, be like salt and be like yourself'. Then he informed Bhaṭṭar the answer as such. Bhaṭṭar elucidated the inner meaning of Anantāzvēṇ's answer as follows:

Śrī Vaiṣṇava will be like a crane:

A crane used to stay on the bank of a river or tank and look for a big fish to eat, without taking small fishes and ate it with taste. Likewise, a Śrī Vaiṣṇava should worship Śrīman Nārāyaṇa and

prefer Bhāgavata Kainkarya which is Parama Puruṣārtha, as liked by the Lord.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava will be like a cock:

A cock digs the hillock in search of grains for its existence. Likewise, a Śrī Vaiṣṇava should review the Sāstrās and leave the benefits that are derived by doing Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti yōgās, Yāga, etc. and should practice Bhāgavata Abhimāna, Ācārya Abhimāna and Paragata Śvīkāra Niṣṭa.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava like salt:

Salt by mixing itself with everything is too tasty. Likewise, Śrī Vaiṣṇava who acquired knowledge should lead the life like an innocent child. This means he himself by disappearing in the Bhāgavata Gōṣṭi and creates pleasure to everyone.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava like Himself:

All the above three qualities of a Śrī Vaiṣṇava are combined in him and hence he told that a Śrī Vaiṣṇava be like him. Then the Śrī Vaiṣṇava amazed to hear the explanation of Bhaṭṭar.

Anantāzvēn's meaningful interpretations on Āzvārs' hymns:

Such a great Ācārya Anantāzvēn gave several meaningful interpretations for Āzvārs' hymns in Nālāyira Divya Prabandham. His candid interpretations always coincide with that of Āzvārs' mind. All these events and interpretations were lucidly recorded by later Ācāryās like Nampillai and Periyavāccāṇpillai in their commentaries. Some of them are purported here for enjoyment and to know Anantāzvēn's devoutness in experiencing Āzvārs' hymns.

In Mudal Tiruvandādi, Poygal Āzvār describes the Lord's attribute of forbearance in the following hymn.

Tirumakaḷum Maṇmakaḷum Āymakaḷum Cērtāi

Tirumakaṭkē Tīrtavāreṅkol - Tirumakaḷmēi

Pāḷōtamcintappaṭanākaṇalkkiṭanta

Māḷōtavaṇṇar Manam.

Āzvār says that it is possible because of the Lord, while assuming the sleeping posture in milky ocean along with Śrīdēvī, Bhūdēvī and Nīlādēvī, fully consummate with Śrīdēvī only. What indeed the sense? Anantāzvēn, by his astute knowledge, interprets the hymns and gives importance to three Consorts individually. He opined thus: "Only Lord

consummate with Śrīdēvī -what indeed a sense?. (Tirumakaṭkē Tīrtavāreṅkol?). Only Lord consummate with Bhūdēvī - What indeed a sense? (Maṇmakaṭkē Tīrtavāreṅkol?) Only Lord consummate with Nīlādēvī - what indeed a sense? (Āymakaṭkē Tīrtavāreṅkol ?)*.

Tiruppāṇāzvār, In his Prabandha Amalanādirān, while enjoying the enthralling beauty of the Lord Raṅganātha, referred to His Conch and the Discus in the hymn, 'Kalyāṇ Curicāṅkanalāzīyar' (7). Here is a thrilling anecdote narrated by Periyavāccāṅpīlāl. It reads thus:

While Bhaṭṭar was staying in Tirukkōṭṭiyūr, Aṇantāzvāṇ asked Bhaṭṭar whether Lord in Valkuṇṭa is seen with two hands or with four hands. Bhaṭṭar replied that both are acceptable. If he is seen with two hands, he is like Periya Perumā! (Mūlavirāṭ in Śrīraṅgam) and If He is seen with four hands, He is like Namperumā! (Utsavamūrti in Śrīraṅgam).

In Āṇḍāl's Nācciyār Tirumozī, Periyavāccāṅpīlāl, reminds an incident on the hymn 'Kārttaṇmukilum' (12.5):

On his way to see Śrī Rāmānuja in Śrīraṅgam, Aṇantāzvāṇ reached the place Vadakarai, where some Ēkāṅgīs, to show their grief on the demise of Śrī Rāmānuja, tonsured their heads and proceeded

further. Having noticed this, another disciple Śrī Nambī Guhadāsan, climbed up a tree and thought of committing suicide by falling down from it. At that time Anantāzvēn noticed and said: 'O Nambī! With your clear mind you have climbed up a tree. How can you die when you carefully thought of safeguarding your body while climbing up. So you won't die now. Come down please'.

Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal narrates another incident while writing commentary for the hymn 'Veruvātāḷ vāyveruvi' (5.5.1) of Tirumangal Āzvēr :

Nañciyār used to enjoy the gesticulation of Bhaṭṭar while pronouncing the beautiful name 'Aḷakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷ' and Anantāzvēn the name 'Tiruvēṅkaṭamuḍaiyān'.

In Nammāzvēr's Tiruvāymoḻi, Āzvēr feels that he is the lowliest of the lowly in the hymn, 'īcaṇ vānavarkku' (3.3.4). This self denunciation assuming the lowliest of the lowly only intensified the grace of the Lord. While discoursing this particular hymn, Yāmunācārya feels that he is a violator of laws, fickle minded, envious, ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful and cruel. He cannot therefore hope to get freed from bondage and serve God, by mentioning the ślōka, 'Amarādaḥ'. Anantāzvēn, when he recites this particular hymn dislikes to say as

felt by Yāmunācārya. He feels that when he was doing Kalinkarya to Lord Śrīnivāsa at the instance of Śrī Rāmānuja, he do not want to say that he is the lowliest of the lowly as Yāmunācārya felt in Stōtraratanam for his hymn. Such is the Ācārya Bhakti of Aṇantāzvāṇ.

In the hymn "Uṇṇumcōru" (6.7.1) Nampillal narrates an anecdote of Aṇantāzvāṇ.

A Śrī Vaiṣṇava, who was a native of Tirukkōḷūr, left that place and was tilling the land at another place. When Aṇantāzvāṇ met that Śrī Vaiṣṇava, Aṇantāzvāṇ asked his whereabouts. He told that he hailed from Tirukkōḷūr. Aṇantāzvāṇ said, "why you have come from that place. You should have employed there by grazing a couple of asses for your livelihood, as the Lord stays there". This shows Aṇantāzvāṇ's devotion on the significance of a Divya Dēśā like Tirukkōḷūr.

Aṇantāzvāṇ's devotion on Lord Śrīnivāsa is widely known. Aṇantāzvāṇ used to think about Lord Śrīnivāsa when he recites the hymn "Entirumagal" (7.2.9) in Tiruvāymoḻi, which actually speaks about Lord Raṅganātha of Śrīraṅgam. In this hymn, Nammāzvār, with the voice of maiden, says that Lord of Śrīraṅgam, adorns His Consort Śrīdēvī in His Chest and He is His very soul, and He once lifted the

Mother earth on His teeth in Varāha Avatāra; He is the lover of Nappinnai whom He won by vanquishing seven fierce bulls. Here, Anantāzvēn used to feel that Lord adorns His Consort Padmāvati in His Chest. When he blessed with a female child, Anantāzvēn named 'Enttūmagal' (My Śrī or My daughter) as called by Nammāzvēr in the above hymn.

In one of the Tanlyans of Tiruvāymozi, Tirumala Anantāzvēn, an ardent devotee of Śrī Rāmānuja, said that he would adore the sacred feet of Śrī Rāmānuja of peerless fame, to enable him to acquire a mind which constantly concentrates on the classical Tamil Vēdā rendered by Nammāzvēr whose qualities are free from all blemishes.

In Perlyāzvēr Tirumozī, Maṇavālamāmuniga! narrates an incident on the hymn 'Nāvakāriyam' (4.4.1). It reads as follows.

Anantāzvēn, in his last days, asked the disciples that what name Bhaṭṭar pronounces. They immediately told that Bhaṭṭar delighted to say the name 'Azakiyamaṇavāḷapperumā!'. Anantāzvēn thought that it is like a wife who pronounces the name of his husband, that was pronounced by Bhaṭṭar, as every soul before Lord is feminine in nature. Since Bhaṭṭar pronounced this name with

great devotion and love, he also pronounced the same name. "Azakiyamaṇavāḷapperumāḷ" and at once he attained Mōkṣa.

It was during the last visit of Śrī Rāmānuja at the age of 102, with a view to streamlining the temple administration, he nominated Śaṭakōpa Jīyar with four Ēkāṅgīs to assist Aṇantāzvāṇ to serve the Lord in all ways to administer the temple under the supervision of Aṇantāzvāṇ.

It was Aṇantāzvāṇ who made arrangements to consecrate the Idol of Śrī Rāmānuja who embraced the Idol in his life time and handed over to Aṇantāzvāṇ for worship in Tirumala. Aṇantāzvāṇ arranged to sing Kaṇṇinuṇcluttāmbu Prabandham on the last day of Adyayana Utsavam to fulfill the desire of Śrī Rāmānuja.

It was Aṇantāzvāṇ who first introduced Tiruvarangapperumāḷ Aṇalyar of Śrīraṅgam who came to worship the Lord, to sing the hymns of Āzvārs set to sweet divine music so pleasing to the Lord, during the beginning of Adhyayana Utsavam. Tirumala Aṇantāzvāṇ's devotion on Lord Śrīnivāsa and His Ācārya Śrī Rāmānuja is par excellence.

He composed four ślōkās on Śrī Rāmānuja which are called 'Rāmānuja Catuślōkī'. It is said that Śrī Vēṅkaṭācala Itihāsamāḷā, a Sanskrit work of 900 years

old, was written by Tirumala Aṇantāzvāṇ. Aṇantāzvāṇ's descendents are still living in Tirumala and Tirupatī by doing service to Śrī Vaiṣṇavism.

The descendents of Aṇantāṇṇṇal family branched off and settled down in various Divya Dēśās for the propagation of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. It is said that some later members of the family even migrated to other parts of South India, particularly in Mēlikōṭē in Karnataka.

Appṇṇal, one of the disciples of Maṇavāḷamāmunṇḷaḷ, praises Aṇantāzvāṇ thus:

May Aṇantāzvāṇ, a father-in-law of Tirumala

Śrīnivāsā prosper!

May Aṇantāzvāṇ, who was born as Aṇantāzvāṇ,

a gem among jewels brightness prosper!

May Aṇantāzvāṇ, who emerged as a succour for the
universe prosper!

May Aṇantāzvāṇ who obtained heavenly bliss by
doing Kaiṅkaryā to Lord who safeguarded the
universe during Praḷayā, prosper!

May Aṇantāzvāṇ, who was born in the bright Citrā
month on Citrā star, prosper!

May Aṇantāzvāṇ, who was the father of Alarmēḷ
Mangai, prosper!

May the Lotus Feet of Aṇantāzvāṇ ever prosper!

CONTRIBUTION OF PERIYAVĀCCĀNPILLAI TO ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVĀ COMMENTARIAL TRADITION

Since the birth of Nammāzvār and till the advent of Śrīman Nāthamuniḡaḡ in the middle of 9th century, there was a lull in propagating the Vēdic doctrines that were transmitted into Tamil hymns by Āzvārs. This resulted more or less in the decay of the system which was rightly transmitted by Nammāzvār from the lineage of Vyāsa, Ṭanka and so on.

For the renaissance of Āzvārs' hymns, the credit goes to the great and first Ācārya Śrīman Nāthamuniḡaḡ whose eloquent voice, pious life, great devotion and gigantic task of consolidating the hymns revived these 4000 hymns and enriched Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, which later came to be known as Ēmpērumānār Darśanam. This paper deals with the following aspects:

1. Origin and the concept of oral and commentarial tradition;
2. Life and works of Periyavāccānpillai ;
3. Periyavāccānpillai's theory of commentarial tradition.

1. Origin and the concept of oral and commentarial tradition:

The origin of oral commentarial tradition can

be traced to the advent of Śrīman Nāthamunigaḷ. It was Śrīman Nāthamunigaḷ who held discussions and made interpretations on the Āzvārs' hymns with his disciples like , and it continued from Uyyakkōṇḍār to Rāma Misra, Rāma Misra to Yāmunācārya and Yāmunācārya to his important disciples viz. Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nambi, Uyyakkōṇḍār, Tirumālalyāṇḍān, Tiruvaraṅgappērumāḷ Aralyar, Periya Nambi, Periya Tirumala Nambi, Tirukkaccl Nambi and so on. These disciples individually conveyed and taught the oral commentaries on Āzvārs' hymns to Śrī Rāmānuja and other disciples, who in turn, passed on to their disciples. Ācārya Ēmbār rightly described this as follows:

"From the ocean like the Supreme, a cloud like Nammāzvār absorbed the water of grace; and poured on the hill like Śrīman Nāthamunigaḷ; that water reached a big river viz. Yāmunācārya from the two cascades i.e. Puṇḍarīkākṣa and Rāma Misra; from these, five channels viz. Periya Nambi, Tirukkōṭṭiyūr Nambi, Tirumālalyāṇḍān, Tiruvaraṅga Pērumāḷ Aralyar and Periya Tirumalai Nambi reached the lake called Śrī Rāmānuja; through 74 drains like Ācāryas and spread to the crops. Viz. .souls." ¹

Until Śrī Rāmānujā's period, there were candid conversations, discussions and dialogues among the successive Ācāryas on the hymns of Āzvārs. The philosophies of Vēdānta are concealed as a hidden treasure of Tiruvāymoḻi. In his opening Sanskrit version of Tiruvāymoḻi, Ācārya Śrīman Nāthamuniḡaḻ called it as the ocean of Tamil Vēdā in which the Upaniṣads of the thousand branches flow together.² It is said that Śrī Rāmānuja wrote commentary for Brahma Sūtra called Śrī Bhāṣya in the light of Nammāzvār's Tiruvāymoḻi.³ The Ācāryas particularly interested in establishing parallels between Śrutī, texts and the hymns of Āzvārs and quote profusely from both traditions.⁴

It was during the period of Śrī Rāmānuja, a galaxy of Ācāryas contributed to the advancement of the concept of Ubhaya Vēdāntā through commentarial tradition. It was Śrī Rāmānuja, who first instructed his disciple Tirukkurukalppirāṇ Pillāṇ to write commentary for Tiruvāymoḻi, to fulfill the wishes of Yāmunācārya. Śrī Rāmānuja wanted the opinions of the earlier Ācāryas to be preserved for posterity and committing the texts to writing ensured that they would not be forgotten.⁵

This paved a way and following Pillāṇ, four other Ācāryas namely Nañciyar,

Periyavāccānpillai, Vaṭakkuttiruvītipillai and Vāḍikēśari Aḷagiyamaṇavāḷa Jīyar wrote a variety of commentaries for Tiruvāymoḻi as heard from their Ācāryas.

So, it was during the period of 11th and 14th centuries, the concept of commentarial tradition in recording the oral opinions and immortal incidents of earlier Ācāryas on the hymns of Āḻvārs, reached its zenith in the sphere of producing Maṇipravāḷa commentaries for the entire Nālāyira Divya Prabandham Stōstrās, Gadyās, Rahasya Grandās. Among these Ācāryas, Periyavāccānpillai was the first and foremost Ācārya to write commentaries for all the hymns of Āḻvārs in Maṇipravāḷa language.

It is to be noted that there were two commentaries during the period of Periyavāccānpillai, but there was no mention of oral opinion of Ācāryas in Pillāṇ's Āṟāyirappadi. However, there is very little mention in Nañciyār's commentary called Onpatināyirappadi.

Hence, it is necessary to know very briefly the life and works of Periyavāccānpillai who recorded profusely several immortal incidents and oral comments of Ācāryas as heard from his Ācārya Nampillai. His contribution to commentarial tradition is significant.

2 Life and works of Periyavāccāṇṭṭai :

Periyavāccāṇṭṭai was born to pious parents Yāmuna Dēśika and Nācciyārammā of Pūrva Śikha Vaiṣṇavā Brāhmin family in Cēṅkanallūr, a venerable place in Tanjore District in the Tamil month Āvaṇi, on Rōhiṇi star in 1167 A.D. This day synchronises with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Jayanti. After doing service to his parents, he left his place and lived at the holy feet of Nampillai, a great commentator in Śrīraṅgam for the remaining part of his life. During his stay in Śrīraṅgam, he was amazed to hear Nampillai's oratorical discourses on Bhagavat Viṣayaṁ and his regular attendance enabled him to win the appreciation of Nampillai and later he became the Ācārya's personal disciple. At the gracious command of Nampillai, he composed a commentary for Tiruvāymoḻi, expounding the essence of Māraṇ's Maṇai, which is overflowing with sweet devotion, called the Twenty Four Thousand.⁶ Maṇavālamāmuṅgai praises Periyavāccāṇṭṭai, as one among the five commentators who endowed with virtuous qualities in safeguarding Tiruvāymoḻi through his commentary.⁷ This commentary is similar to Śrī Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa Ślōkāś covering 24000 anuṣṭup verses. It is said that this is a study on the elucidation of Pillāṇ's

Ārāyirappaḍi and Ōnpatināyirappaḍi.⁸

In the interest of creating awareness among the āstikās and at the behest of Nampillai, he wrote commentaries for other Āzvārs' hymns i.e. from Tiruppallāṇḍu to Pēriya Tirumaḍal covering 23 Prabandham. Pillaiōkam Jīyar says that though Āzvārs' hymns are in simple Drāviḍa Bhāṣā (Tamil) with divinity, melodious to hear, soft and simple in style, it is difficult to grasp the inner meanings as thought of by the Āzvārs.⁹ Such a revelation was acquired by Periyavāccānpillai by the grace of Nampillai, and he was able to comment on all Āzvārs' hymns besides Rahasyagrandās, Stōtrās, Gadyās and so on, for his satisfaction and for the understanding of others as well. Maṇavālamūnigaḷ says that whereas Periyavāccānpillai wrote explicit commentaries on other Divya Prabandham works also, it has now been possible for Preceptors to explain the deep meanings of the works of grace.¹⁰ His other works are as follows:

Commentaries for Yāmunācāryā's Stōtra Ratnam and Catuślōki, Itantē Stōtram, Rāmānujā's Gadyatrayam, select ślōkās in Śrī Rāmāyaṇa, Mahā Bhārata, Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa and Varāha Purāṇa called Tanīślōkī, Rahasya Granthās like Paranda

Rahasyam, Māṇikkamālai, Sakalapramāṇa Tātparyam, Rahasyatraya Dīpika, Rahasyatraya Vivaraṇam, Nigamanappaḍi, Upakārasmṛuti and Kalliyān Aruḷappāḍu.

His mastery over the Maṇḍapravāḷa commentaries enabled him to adorn the four chairs (thrones) of learning i.e. Prabandham, Rahasyagrandās, Tanśīlōkī and Stōtras and he won the coveted title Vṛākyāna Cakravartī (The King of Commentators).¹¹

3 Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭai's theory of commentarial tradition:

From the study of Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭai's works, one can come to the conclusion that he set up a theory of propagating the concept of Ubhaya Vēdānta through his commentaries by showing equivalency of Drāviḍa Vēdā with that of Vēdās for easy approach of devoted people of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism, besides enlightening the oral tradition. Hence, it is necessary to classify the theory of commentarial tradition as seen from the commentaries of Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭai under the following aspects:

- 1 .Safeguarding oral commentarial tradition;
2. Critical expositions of Āzvārs' experience;
3. Elucidation of Vēdic thoughts;

4. Influence on epic themes; and

5. Textual variations;

Among the aspects shown above, in the interest of creating awareness unversally about the oral comments of earller Ācāryas as recorded by Periyavāccānpillai, I preferred to present more thoughts on the aspects of 'Safeguarding oral commentarial tradition' and 'critical expositions of Āzvārs' experience'.

3.1 Safeguarding oral commentarial tradition:

The most striking characteristic of Periyavāccānpillai's commentaries is recording the dialogues, interpretations of Pūrvācāryās beginning from Śrīman Nāthamunigaḷ down to his Ācārya Nampillai. Actually Periyavāccānpillai's commentary for Āzvārs' hymns is an oasis in giving ample information on the oral tradition of Ācāryas. As said earller, during his period, there were only two commentaries of Tiruvāymoḻi i.e. Ārāyirappaḍi and Ōnpadīnāyirappaḍi, only very few dialogues or interpretations of earller Ācāryas were recorded in Ōnpadīnāyirappaḍi. Periyavāccānpillai was all the time hearing discourses at the holy feet of Nampillai. Nampillai safeguarded oral comments of earller Ācāryas, like stored water in the lake, and taught all

these oral comments to his disciples namely,
Periyavāccāṇṭippallai and Vaḍakkuttiruvīdippillai.

Periyavāccāṅṇṭṭal, with his astute knowledge and memory, included almost all oral comments of earlier Ācāryas and Immortal Incidents in his commentaries. The study of the oral comments and Immortal Incidents can be classified as follows: 1. Master-disciple relationship; 2. Significance of Vyūhā; 3. Significance of Avatārās and 4. Significance of Arcāvātāra.

3.1.1 Master-disciple relationship:

While explaining Āzvārs' hymns, Periyavāccāṅkī records the relationship of Ācāryas to his disciples in those days. There are several interpretations between Śrī Rāmānuja and his disciples like Kūrattāzvaṇ, Ēmbār, Mudaliyāṇḍān, Pillāṇ, Bhaṭṭar and Nañciyar, Nañciyar and Nampīlāl and others.

The following Interpretation throws light on the master-disciple relationship, particularly between Nañciyar and Nampillai. In those days, apart from showing the natural scene of particular Divya Dēśa,

Tirumangal Āzvār in his Prabandham describes the natural scene of Tiruppirldhi, a Divya Dēśa in North, in the following line:

**'Kariyamāmukirpaṭalaṅkaḥ Kṛtāntavaḥ Muzāṅkṛtā Kallirēnu
Periya Māsunamvaraiyenappeyartaru Piridhi'**¹²

In explaining this line, Periyavāccānpillai quotes a discussion between Ācārya Nañciyar and Nampillai.

For the phrase 'varaiyenappeyartaru', Nañciyar gave the meaning that since Poygal Āzvār says that in Tirumala Hills, the pythons, on hearing the cacophony of thunder reach their shelter and there is also a saying that pythons, out of fear for elephants reach the shelter. Having heard this meaning, Nampillai wanted to say some other meaning. Having noticed his thought, Nañciyar asked him to say what he wanted to say. Nampillai said that here the word 'peyar' means moving in and out common for both, pythons and clouds. People who express superiority of pythons used to say that pythons can swallow the elephant. Hence, as the pythons hear the sound of thunders, they think that it is of elephant's and wish to swallow the elephant as food by moving to the nearer place. Nañciyar was amazed to hear this interpretation of his disciple, accepted it and applauded him.

This shows the Ācārya's magnanimity without letting false pride about his own erudition and treat the disciple in a congenial manner.

1. In explaining the meaning for a line 'Kārttanmukilum' in Nācciyār Tirumozī¹³,

Periyavāccāṇṇiḥḥ reminds an Incident:

On his way to see Śrī Rāmānuja in Śrīraṅgam, Anantāzvēn reached the place Vadakaraḥ, where some Ēkāṅgīs, to show their grief on the demise of Śrī Rāmānuja tonsured their heads and proceeded further. Having noticed this, another disciple Śrī Nambī Guhadāsan, climbed up a tree and thought of committing suicide by falling down from it. At that time, Anantāzvēn noticed and said: 'O Nambī With your clear mind you have climbed up the tree. How can you die when you carefully thought of safeguarding your body while climbing up. So you won't die now. Come down please'.

3.1.2 Significance of Vyūhā:

In Mudal Tiruvandāḍi, Poygal Āzvēr describes the Lord's attribute of forbearance in the hymn, 'Tirumakaḷum'.¹⁴ Āzvēr says that it is possible because of the Lord, while assuming the sleeping posture in milky ocean along with Śrīdēvī, Bhūdēvī and Nīlādēvī, fully consummate with Śrīdēvī only. What indeed the sense?. Anantāzvēn, by his astute knowledge, interprets the hymns and gives importance to three Consorts individually. He opined thus: "Only Lord consummate with Śrīdēvī -what indeed a sense?. (Tirumakaḷkē Tīrtavāreṅkol ?)

Only Lord consummate with Bhūdēvī - What Indeed a sense? (Maṇmakatḱē Tīrtavāreṅkol ?) Only Lord consummate with Nīlādēvī - what Indeed a sense? (Āymakatḱē Tīrtavāreṅkol ?)".

3.1.3 Significance of Avatārās:

Vāmana:

In explaining a line 'Ēṅgum Adirappugudakkanākkāṇḍēn Tōlī Nān' In Nācciyār Tirumozī',¹⁵ Pillai records the discussion of Nañciyar with Bhaṭṭar. It is normally known from a text that Vāmana went to Yāgaśāla of Mahābhalla. At that time, the earth bent. It means it is Lord's action. Bhaṭṭar says that Vāmanā was in agitated mind which begging before Mahābhalla and He staggered, that resulted bent in earth.

Rāma and Kṛṣṇa:

1. With reference to the word 'Kaṇṇanaḱ' in Tirumālai¹⁶, Periyavāccānpillai means that when one worships Periya Perumal (Mulaavar) in Śrīraṅgam, one can notice that He is none but Kṛṣṇā who came here to help those who have not seen Him in Kṛṣṇāvatāra, Pillai quotes the experience of Bhaṭṭar. He says that we see in Periya Perumal the nature of Kṛṣṇa who was nurtured by Yaśōdā, overlooking his

mischievousness In Kṛṣṇāvatāra; we see in Namperumal (Utsavamoothi) the politeness of Rāmā who was trained by Vaṣiṣṭha and others in Rāmāvatāra.

II. In Nācciyār Tirumozī, Āṇḍāl praises the herdswomen who were associated with Kṛṣṇa as 'Nīḍu Ninru Niralpuga! Ācciyar'¹⁷ which Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal means that herdswomen were extolled for their union and separation with Kṛṣṇa now and then. Here, Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal quotes Ēmbār's Interpretation. He says that the cause to extol herds women is that they have starved Kṛṣṇa for four days; some for ten days.

III. In another place Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal records the Śrī Rāmānujā's Inner thought as explained by his Ācārya Nampṭṭal, for the line.

'Oliya vennaiundan endru uralodu ayyichchi onn kayitral
vllaiya varka vappundu vimmi azhuthan.'¹⁸

Śrī Rāmānuja had a doubt about how Kṛṣṇa being a controller of Universe, controlled Himself before Yaśōdā to round him up with a rope by beating Him. With tears he accepts this act.

Vaṅḍipuraththu Nambī asked Śrī Rāmānuja to teach him Tiruvārādanakramā. Being an Ācārya, Śrī Rāmānuja hesitated. At one time in Tirumala, Śrī Rāmānuja was preaching Tiruvārādanakramā to

Kūrattālvān and Nambī Śrī Hanumat Dāsar. At that time Vaṅḡpurattu Nambī visited there. Having seen Nambī, Śrī Rāmānuja startled and thought as follows: " A very long time doubt in my mind is cleared now. I was every doubt how Kṛṣṇa, who is a Controller of Universe became afraid and was controlled Himself for beating up by Yaśōda and with tears he accepts her rounding up him with a rope. For these embarrassments (1) When Nambī wishes to learn Tiruvārādanakrama, he has not done, because he thought that he is an Ācārya; (2) Now with these two disciples, he cannot sit with them and learn } I feared and hence it was possible for Kṛṣṇa also, to be afraid of Yaśōda.

In this way Periyavāccānpillai highlights Ācārya's inner thought by aptly quoting incidents amidst hymns.

3.1.4 Significance of Archavatara:

i. In Tirunedunthandagam, Tirumangal Āzvār has given a name for Lord Kṛṣṇa, 'mandramarakutta.'¹⁶ Periyavāccānpillai means that the fragrance persists even after Kṛṣṇa left the place after dancing with vessels on the head. He quotes that Bhaṭṭar compares it as follows; In Śrīraṅgam, when the Utsavamurthi (Nampērūmal) pass on from one

street to another street, that street had the fragrance of Kasturi of Namperumal's Divya Mangala Vighraha. Likewise in Kṛṣṇā's Āyppāḍi also, after Kṛṣṇa played by putting vessels on the head and dancing, the smell will be lasting.

ii. In his explanation for the line 'Valankol manaththaravaral'²⁰ In Periya Tirumozl¹, Periyavāccānpillai narrates an incident as enjoyed by Nañciyar. Nañciyar says that he accompanied Pillai Tirunaralyur Arayar and Bhattar to pass round the temple in Tirukkadanmallai (Mahaballipuram). Not an act of going round the temple speedily as he was, they were seeing the temple and tower with rapture. This reveals Ācāryās attachment to temple worship.

III. Periyavāccāṇṭipīlī narrates another incident while writing commentary for the hymn 'veruvadai vai veruvi'²¹ of Tirumangal Āzvār.

Nañciyar, used to enjoy the gesticulation of Bhaṭṭar while pronouncing the beautiful name 'Alagiya Manavala Perumal' and Anantāzvān, the name 'Tiruvēkatamudayan'.

iv. In explaining the line, 'paillikamalatthidaiappatta paguvayalavan mugam nokki nalliyudum vayal suzhntha nayaliyur'²² Pillai quotes the conversation between Bhattar and Pillai Tirunaralyur Arayar, which shows

the superiority of the Divya Dēśa, where Nācciyār is the main deity.

A male crab, whose mouth is big, was sleeping in the lotus; the female crab, who was pregnant and fatigued; the male crab thought of giving his spouse some sweets. It flew into another lotus flower. As sun sets, it rolled down its body here and there and stayed overnight in that flower. The filaments and farina of the flower shadowed in its body when it woke up next day. The female crab was looking for her husband by guarding at the door step. Having seen the crab with so much of symbols in its body, the female crab shut the doors, thinking that her husband stayed overnight in some other place and hence those symbols in his body. Having listened to this description, Arayar asked Bhaṭṭar that only after enquiry should the female crab have found fault with male crab and punish. Why she did like that? Bhaṭṭar, in reply, said that there is no administration of justice, as this place is governed by a woman. Bhaṭṭar rightly thinks that Nācciyār Koll is ruled by Nācciyār (Pennarasī Nadu).

3.2 Critical expositions of Āzvārs' experience:

Periyavāccānpillai's style in explaining the word to word meaning is akin to Āzvārs' thoughts. In

reference to language and elegance, the rate of Tamil words to Sanskrit words is about 2 to 1. He usually adopts the style of Tamil mixed with Sanskrit words which is peculiar to the Vaiṣṇava Ācāryās, at places he writes in a very lucid and simple Tamil.²³

His critical expositions may be classified under several aspects. I. Giving exhaustive meanings and explanation for a single word or line; II. Explaining the inner thought of Āzvēār's in the introduction of Prabandham; III. Description of Grammar, similies, metaphor, philosophy and bridal mysticism of Āzvēār's; IV. Textual variations and so on. The first two aspects are explained below.

3.2.1 Giving exhaustive meanings and explanation for a single word or line:

I. In the very first stanza of his commentary on Andal's Tiruppaval, Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal elucidates the line 'kurvel kodunthozhin'²⁴ which means literally that Nandagopalan who was of the coward community was usually a docile people. Periyavāccāṇṇṭṭal says that he was docile before the birth of Kṛṣṇā and now with a view to protecting the child from the fear of Kamsa, he was aggressive with a weapon in this hand.

ii. In another place, while giving meaning for the

line 'Nangal Peruman Uralyum NandipuravInnagaram Nannumanme'²⁵ Periyavāccānpillai enlightens the significance of Arcāvatāra as follows:

The stage of Para (Valkunṭa) is for NityasurIs; Vyūha (Milky ocean) is the place for redeeming the meanness of Brahma, Śiva and others; Avatars like Rāmā and Kṛṣṇā were for the benefit of Śrī Vasudeva, Dasaratha and others; whereas Arcāvatāra is for all of us; for worshipping the archa form, the Nitya SurIs are coming here (Tiruvinnagar) in disguise as men; Periyavāccānpillai quotes that, it is like people with open eyes enter into the house of blind men to have benefits by closing the eyes themselves. Such is the greatness of Arcāvatāra.

III. When Periyavāccānpillai gives , meanings for Āzvārs' hymns, he used to compare the theme of Śrī Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata and so on, even though there is no mention in that particular hymn about the epics. In Tirunedunthandakam, Āzvār, in disguise of Nāyaki, requested the red legged heron to meet the Lord of Tirukkannapuram with a message. If he conveys the message, there will be no more happiness than this and to show gratitude, she will give fishes as a food. Here, in explaining the word 'Uralththiyagil', Periyavāccānpillai compares Āzvār's stage with that of Sita who sends message through

but could not achieve it. Hence, he surrendered before the Lord with distress in Tiruvezhukuttrukkai.

Rāmā did Saranagati before the King of the Ocean, for the sake of crossing the ocean, but could not achieve it. Likewise, Āṣvār who could not see the Lord, practiced Madal in both Prabandhams i.e. Siriya Tirumadal and Pēriya Tirumadal. In Siriya Tirumadal, Āṣvār in disguise of Parakala Nāyaki, says that she will perform Madal by destroying Lord's attributes in Arcāvatāra and His wealth. Even then, He has not appeared. So, in Pēriya Tirumadal, Āṣvār in disguise of Nāyaki, told that she will destroy the Arcāvatāra where He appears as in Para stage, which is the abode for Him as well as Āṣvār to worship. At last, the Lord Himself felt that if even now He has not appeared before Āṣvār, the world may raise doubt about Īśvara.

At last, the Lord Himself felt that world may lose His existence without Him, even now if he does not show His Divya Maṅgala Vighraha. Hence, the Lord showed His Divya Maṅgala Vighraha to Āṣvār as He had shown to Prahlada and others.

Periyavāccānpillai further describes the nature of Āṣvārs as follows:

He states that Sages like Sukha and Mudal Āṣvārs were in the experience of Paratva; Sages like

Vālmīki and Kulaśēkhara Āzvār were firm in worshipping Rāmāvatara; Sages like Pārāśara, Nammāzvār, Periyāzvār and Āṇḍāl were in praise of Kṛṣṇāvatara; Sages like Nārada, Śrī Tondaradīppodīāzvār and Tiruppanāzvār were firm in Śrīraṅgaṃ, the above of Lord Raṅganātha; and Śrī Saunaka Bhagavān and Tirumangal Āzvār were firm in Arcāvatāra.

In the last Prabandham i.e. Tirunēḍuntāṇḍakam, Periyavāccāṇṇṇṇal says that the Lord spontaneously graced the Āzvār to experience the nature of chit, achit and Īśvara and having not satisfied, he was agitated to have darśana and satisfied by attaining Mōkṣa.²⁶

It is necessary that one has to ponder over Periyavāccāṇṇṇal's Ācārya Bhakti, reverence on Āzvārs and ingenuity in safeguarding the oral comments on Āzvārs' hymns and immortal incidents by studying his commentaries traditionally and be proud of his tireless and significant contribution in the furtherance of Śrīvaiṣṇavāṃ.

It may not be an exaggeration that but for his tireless contribution, Śrīvaiṣṇavā Maṇḍapravāḷa literature, particularly Āzvārs' hymns would not have got prominence and fame among the people of India and abroad.

From the ocean like commentaries of Periyavāccāṇpiḷai, with a ladle like my little knowledge, I could present some enlivening truths of commentarial tradition with particular reference to Āzvārs' hymns as contributed by Periyavāccāṇpiḷai.

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A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF अहं वेत्ति ŚLŌKA IN ŚRĪ VĀLMĪKI RĀMĀYAṆA

The story of Śrī Rāmāyaṇa is loveable to every human being. Nārada in his Saṅkṣēpa Rāmāyaṇa narrates the several traits of Śrī Rāma to Śrī Vālmīki. At the instance of Brahma, Vālmīki vouchsafed Śrī Rāmāyaṇa. Vālmīki himself narrates the characteristics of Śrī Rāma and also introduces the good qualities of Śrī Rāma with the voice of King Daśaratha, Kauśalya, Sītā, Riṣīs and so on in all Kāṇḍās. In this, I wish to present this paper on the critical appreciation of Viśvāmitra in enlightening Daśaratha, the important traits of Śrī Rāma, who is the incarnation of Viṣṇu, in a single Ślōka.

In the Court of Daśaratha in Ayōdya, Viśvāmitra entered and having received rousing reception from Daśaratha, he informed the purpose of his visit, particularly to perform Yāga in a peaceful manner. To achieve this, he requested Daśaratha to send Śrī Rāma along with him for ten days. Having listened to his request, Daśaratha, though assured earlier for any request, was taken aback for sometime because of his attachment to Śrī Rāma. At that time, Viśvāmitra highlighted the significant traits of prowess and greatness of Śrī Rāma through a Ślōka.

The Ślōka reads as follows:

अहं वेद्यि महात्मानं रामं सत्यपराक्रमम् ।
वसिष्ठोऽपि महातेजा ये चेमे तपसि स्थिताः ॥¹

The Inner thoughts of Viśvāmitra as hidden in this Ślōka is beautifully unearthed by the famous Śrī Vaiṣṇava Commentator Periyavāccāṇ Pīlāi of 13th century in his text Tanīślōki. In this Ślōka, Pīlāi enlightens the greatness of Śrī Rāma, His attributes, His beauty and His prowess.

Greatness of Śrī Rāma:

Pīlāi analyses the word अहं वेद्यि in 10 types and establishes the greatness of Śrī Rāma.

The Muṇḍakōpaniṣad text - न चक्षुषा गृह्यते means that God is apprehended neither by the eye nor by speech.² Viṣṇu Dharma says मनसा तु विशुद्धेन that He is grasped by the pure mind only.³ Similarly Nammāzvār says என்னேனும் கட்கண்ணால் காணாத அவ்வுருவை நெஞ்சென்னும் உட்கண்ணேல் காணும் உணர்ந்து which means that God, who is not to be seen by mere eye, is to be seen by mind.⁴ Hence, Viśvāmitra says that he, having practiced Yōga, knows Śrī Rāma well, than Daśaratha. Viśvāmitra, who worshipped several Ācāryas as said in Bhāratā ज्ञानवृद्धा मया राजन् बहवः पर्युपासितः which means that elders who were intellectuals

were meditated by him, knows Śrī Rāma well than Daśaratha who was worshipped by Ignorant persons.^{4a} Further, he says that he has grass in his hand which enables him to know Śrī Rāma, whereas Daśaratha has arrow in his hand. He also supplemented that he is naturally Sātvika who knows Śrī Rāmā whereas Daśaratha has Rājasa Guṇa. Hence Daśaratha could not know Śrī Rāma properly. Manu Smṛiti says नीचशय्यासनं चास्य नित्यं स्याद्गुरुसन्निधौ which means that he, who as a disciple, sits at a level lower than that of Gurupīṭha knows God,⁵ than Daśaratha who sits as a King in Simhāsana. Further, he who desires for Mōkṣa, can know Him, than Daśaratha who desires for Putra. He, who is firm in getting Dharma and Mōkṣa, knows Him whereas Daśaratha, who is firm in getting Artha and Kāma.⁶ Brahadāraṇyakōpaniṣad says नेति नेति which declares that Brahman is "not this much only; not this much only".⁷ Kathōpaniṣad text क इत्या वेद means that who knows how that Brahman is?⁸ Similarly Nammāzvār says நான்முகன் சென்சடையான் என்றிவர்கள் எம்பெருமான் தன்மையை யாறிகிற்பார் which means Brahma, Siva and others are incapable of assessing the nature and magnificence of our Lord.⁹ Further Taittiriyaōpaniṣad text - सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद means

that the Brahman is also not aware of His nature and splendour, He cannot be assessed even by Himself.¹⁰ Nammāzvār also says தனக்கும் தன் தன்மை அறிவரியான்.¹¹ When all these texts say about the difficulty in knowing Him, how is it possible for Viśvāmitra to know Śrī Rāma. Pillai explains the reasons as follows:

Muṇḍakōpaniṣad text यस्सर्वज्ञस्सर्ववित् means that one who knows the nature of all things.¹² Śvētāsvatarōpaniṣad declares स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च that Paramātmā possesses the natural knowledge, prowess and action.¹³ In Bhagavat Gīta, It is said तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् । ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥ which means that to those who are constantly devoted and worshipping Him with love, He will grant the concentration of understanding by which they reach Him.¹⁴ Nammāzvār also declares மயர்வற மதிநலம் அருளினை which means that the God who endowed him (Nammāzvār) with Bhakti and Jñāna by dispelling Ajñāna (ignorance).¹⁵ Hence, only those who were guided by an Acārya can know Him. To fulfill that lapse, Śrī Rāma meditates those elders who have mellowed wisdom and serves them.¹⁶ Brahadāranyakōpaniṣad says तमेतं वेदानुवचनेन ब्राह्मणा विविदिषन्ति यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा अनशकेन which means,

that Brahmins, by reciting the Vēdās, through sacrifices, by charity, not leading to destruction, religious austerities, wish to know Him.¹⁷ The same Upaniṣad says श्रोतव्यः मन्तव्यः निदिध्यासितव्यः that verily the Paramātmā alone, has to be seen, has to be heard, has to be reflected upon and has to be steadily meditated upon.¹⁸ In this way, Viśvāmitra struggled hard to know Śrī Rāma. Hence he begins the Ślōka as अहं वेदि.

Śrī Rāma as Mahātmā:

Viśvāmitra further says that he knows Śrī Rāma as Mahātmā. Pillai narrates the name Mahātmā which is appropriate for Śrī Rāma in many ways.

In Raguvamśa, it is said तेजसां हि न वयः समीक्ष्यते which means that the young age is not to be looked upon in those whose body appears bright.¹⁹ Likewise though Śrī Rāma is young, His greatness is par excellence. Further according to Vyjayanti lexicon, the word "Ātmā" in Mahātmā has ten meanings: They are: आत्मा जीवे (soul) धृती (courage) देहे (Divyamaṅgaḷa Vighraha) स्वभावे (nature) परमात्मनि (Supreme) । यत्ने (Perseverance) अर्क् (sun) अग्नौ (fire) मतौ (knowledge) वाते (wind)।²⁰ These are appropriate to Śrī Rāma.

1. Śrī Rāma as a soul (Ātmā):

The Brahmadāraṇyakōpaniṣad text यस्यात्मा शरीरं, य आत्मनी तिष्ठन्नात्मनो अन्तरः declares that He, who dwells in Ātmā, who is within the self, whom the self does not know, whose body the self is, who controls self from within, is his Ātmā, the Inner ruler, the Immortal.²¹ So, Śrī Rāma is Paramacētana.

2. Śrī Rāmā's Courage(Dhṛti):

Courage means आपद्यपि स्वकार्येषु कथं व्यवस्थिति धृतिः - one who has firmness in his work during testing times.²² Śrī Rāma has taken a vow with firmness in completing the work of destroying the enemies like Tāṭaka, Subhāhu, Mārīca and so on who are disturbing the Yagjñā.

3. Śrī Rāmā's Divyamaṅgaḷa Vighraha (देहम्):

In Varāha Purāṇa It is said नित्यं नित्याकृतिधरं which means that God is Immortal and He has Immortal Divyamaṅgaḷa Vighraha.²³ In Vāyu Purāṇa It is said न तस्य प्राकृता मूर्तिर्मांसमेदो अस्थिसंभवा which means that God whose Divyamaṅgaḷa Vighraha has no flesh, nerve or muscle.²⁴ Similarly, Nammāḻvār says மாருணாச்சுடருடம்பாய் which means even Brahmā's Inestimable wisdom can comprehend the correct dimensions of either His effulgent physical

form or the super wisdom or the auspicious qualities with no fair degree of accuracy at all.²⁵ Such is the beauty of Divyamaṅgaḷa Viṅraha of Śrī Rāma which Viśvāmitra enjoyed.

4. Nature (Svabhāvam) of Śrī Rāma:

Periyavāccāṇ Pillai cites Vibhīṣaṇa Śaraṇāgatī. While decided to give protection to Vibhīṣaṇa, Śrī Rāma says सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते । अभयं सर्व भूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम ॥ which means that Śrī Rāma will safeguard those who surrendered Him, from all creatures.²⁶

5. Śrī Rāma as Supreme (Paramātmā):

The word para means परो मास्मादिति परमः i.e. no one is superior to Him.²⁷ Taittirīyopaniṣad declares यस्मात्परं नापरमस्ति किञ्चित् which means that no one is superior to Him.²⁸ Similarly Śvētāsvataropaniṣad says न तत्समश्चाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते which points out that no one is equal or superior to Him.²⁹ Nammāṣvār says ஒத்தார் மிக்காரை இலையாய மாமாயா which means that He is peerless or superior.³⁰ Hence, Śrī Rāma is superior to other Dēvās and He is Antaryāmi to all.

6. Śrī Rāmā's perseverance (Yatnam):

Śrī Rāma is possessing perseverance which is also called उत्साहः. This is called Ātma Dharma. Otherwise known as भावना which means one who promotes anyone's interest. In Bhagavat Gīta, Kṛṣṇa says परित्राणाय शादूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृतां । धर्मं संस्थापनार्ताय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ which points out that for the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of righteousness, He assumes birth from age to age.³¹ So Viśvāmitra says that he knows Śrī Rāma who has उत्साह in destroying the wicked.

7. Śrī Rāma as a Sun (Sūrya):

Viśvāmitra says that Śrī Rāma never expects any weapons. But by his prowess, he will destroy Rākṣasās like sun dries up water, as stated in Sundara Kāṇṭha Ślōka रामदिवाकरः । शत्रुरक्षोमयं तोयमुपशोषं नयिष्यति ॥³²

8. Śrī Rāma as a fire (Agni):

Piṅgal refers that when Bharāta visits Citrakūṭa, he sees Śrī Rāma like fire sitting with Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa. Vālmīki says अभितः पावकोपमम्.³³ Further Hanumān says निर्दहेदपि काकुस्थः कृद्धस्तीव्रेण चक्षुषा which means that if he goes back without any message

from Sīta, Śrī Rāma will get angry with burning flame in his eyes.³⁴ Pillai also reminds us the sayings of Tirumaṅgaiyālvār in Tirunēḍuntāṇḍakam : அனலுருவில் திகழும் கோதி தன்னுருவாய் which means that the Lord looks like fire and destroys the enemies into ashes.³⁵ Hence, Viśvāmitra knows Śrī Rāma as a burning flame when he gets angry.

9. Śrī Rāma as a knowledgeable one (मति:):

Nārada says सर्व शास्त्रार्थ तत्त्वज्ञः which declares that Śrī Rāma knows the true meanings of all Sāstrās.³⁶ It is said बुद्ध्या ह्यष्टाङ्गया युक्तः which means that He knows the eight angas of jñāna by which he destroys enemies from his place without moving anywhere.³⁷ Such knowledgeable one, He is, whom Viśvāmitra knows well.

10. Rama in the form of wind (वात):

Viśvāmitra says that he knows Śrī Rāma who in the form of wind is to be worshipped as stated in Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa: तस्मै वातात्मने नमः.³⁸ Similarly Nammāḻvār says காலாய்த்தீயாய் which means that God who created fire and air. Śrī Rāma destroys enemies, not knowing their place, like air which throws away the cotton heap.³⁹ Parāśara Bhaṭṭar in his commentary for the word Mahātmā in Śrī Viṣṇu Sahasranāma,

says मृतसञ्जीवनं हि राम वृत्तान्तं which means that the story of Śrī Rāma will glve life to the dead.⁴⁰ Like that, Śrī Rāma is the protector of all, as the wind that blows to glve life to everybody.

In this way, Periyavāccāṇ Pillai explains the word Mahātmā that is appropriate to Śrī Rāma as perceived by Viśvāmitra.

Further, Periyavāccāṇ Pillai compares the Vēdic text -वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तम् with that of the first line of this Ślōka अहं वेद्मि महात्मानम् रामं सत्य पराक्रमम् as follows. The Vēdic text वेद is analysed as वेद्मि. The word अहं is being given as अहं, here. The word एतम् which means Avatāra form is determined as रामम्. The word, पुरुष is determined his valour and power as सत्यपराक्रमम्. The word महान्तम् is explained here as महात्मानम्. Hence, the sayings of Vēdapuruṣa and Vaidīkapuruṣa are same in this context.⁴¹

To clear the doubt about Mahātmā, Viśvāmitra says that Śrī Rāma is Mahātmā. Here Śrī Rāma means Bhagavān Viṣṇu. Śrī Rāma made Daśaratha to accede to his demand that He be born as his son.⁴² Pillai says that neither Daśaratha feared to go near him as He is Paravastu, nor He goes far away with disgust, Śrī Rāma, as subordinate to Viśvāmitra, is obedient to him.⁴³ Hence, Daśaratha is not aware of Śrī Rāmā's greatness. Pillai establishes this

statement by quoting Yajur Vēdā which says स उ श्रेयान् भवति जायमानः which means that He attains greatness after being born . Likewise Śrī Rāma attained greatness after being born to Daśaratha.⁴⁴

With a view to clearing the doubt of Daśaratha who thinks that Śrī, Rāma who has not lost his smoothness in his body and he is not firm in doing hard work and doubted about this big work, Viśvāmitra says सत्यपराक्रमम्. It means Śrī Rāma has unstinted valour. His Divyamaṅgaḷa Viḡraha which will change when he likes. But His attributes are eternal.⁴⁵ Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa says सदैकरूपरूपाय, which means that His para rupa is always in the same manner.⁴⁶ Cāndōkyōpaniṣad says त इमे सत्याः कामाः i.e. that the attributes of Lord are called Satyāḥ Kāmāḥ.⁴⁷ Śvētāsvatarōpaniṣad says इच्छागृहीतभिमतोरुदेहः which means Avatāra Viḡraha is being taken by His wish, but His attributes are eternal.⁴⁸ In Śrī Viṣṇu Purāṇa It is said तेजोबलैश्वर्य महावबोध सुवीर्य शक्त्यादि गुणैकराशिः which means that Lord, by His desire, first takes Avatāra and His attributes like Jñāna, Śakti, Bhala, Īśvarya etc. are mentioned then.⁴⁹ Referring to prowess of Śrī Rāma, which is permanent, Pīlḷal quotes that Śrī Rāma will not return without victory. He, himself invades against enemies.⁵⁰ Similarly, Tirumaṅgalyālvār says

சென்று கொண்டு* வென்றி கொண்ட வீரனே which means that If Śrī Rāma begins the war against enemies, he will destroy them and return.⁵¹

Further, Pillai explains in the second line of the Ślōka, that Vasīṣṭha who has Bramhatējas and is a Sarvagjñā and other Rṣīs who are firm in their meditation are aware of the greatness of Śrī Rāma.

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3. *Viṣṇu Dharma* 275.2.
4. *Pēriya Tiruvandādi* 28.
- 4(a). *Bhārata Sabhā Parva* 33.12.
5. *Manu Smṛiti* 2.198.
6. *Tanīślōkī commentary* p.3.
7. *Bṛahadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 4.3.6.
8. *Kathōpaniṣad* 1.2.25.
9. *Tiruvāymoḻi* 8.3.9
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12. *Muṇḍakōpaniṣad* 1.1.10.
13. *Śvētāśvatarōpaniṣad* 6.8.
14. *Bhagavat Gītā* 10.10.
15. *Tiruvāymoḻi* 1.1.1.
16. *Rāmāyaṇa Ayodhyakanda* 2.33.
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21. *Brahadāraṇyakōpaniṣad* 5.7.26.
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26. *Rāmāyaṇā Yudhdhakāṇḍam* 18.34.
27. *Taniśiōkī* commentary p.8.
28. *Taittiriyōpaniṣad* 10.23
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VĀDIKĒSARI AḶAGIYA MAṆAVĀḶA JĪYAR'S PANNĪRĀYIRAPPAḶI

Since the birth of Śrī Rāmānuja, TiruvāymoḶi has won great prominence and reputation with its five commentaries written by Śrī Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas. They are: ĀrāyirappaḶi (6000) by Tirukkurugalpplān Pillān, ŌnpadināyirappaḶi (9000) by Nanjīyar, IrupattunālāyirappaḶi (24000) by Pēliyavāccān Pillal, ĪḶu (36000) by VaḶakkuttiruvĪdippillal and PannĪrāyirappaḶi (12000) by VāḶikēśari AḶagiyamaṇavāḶa Jīyar. A PaḶi is a unit of word content of the length of 32 letters forming an anustup verse. The word content of PannĪrāyirappaḶi is approximately of the length of 12000 anustup Ślōkas..

From time immemorial Tamil language has claimed prominence by producing several works - commentaries based on prosody. It is said that Nakkirar 's commentary (8th century) on KaḶaviyal (a chapter on secret communion of lovers) is the first famous work. For TirukkuraḶ, MaṇakkuḶavar's commentary was the first one and later it was followed by ten commentaries.

When we consider the place of Jīyar's commentary in Tamil language, it is interesting to note that his commentary is precise in giving word

by word explanation for the verses. This resembles Parlmēlaḷagar's commentary for Tirukkuraḷ. The fundamental principles as laid down in Tolkapḷyam and Irāḷyanār Agappōruḷ on the use of grammar on love themes as contained in Āḷvār's hymns find a place in the commentary. Hence Jīyar finds a unique place in the dictionary of Tamil scholars published in 1962 by Śalvasiddānta Kaḷagam.¹

Tiruvāymoḷi, otherwise called Bhagavat Viṣayam, is very popular through its five commentaries. This is well stated by Maṇavāḷa Māmunigaḷ through a hymn in his Upadēśaratnamāla.² Jīyar's commentary presents a highly intellectual treat and enables us to comprehend easily the ideas in other commentaries. Pillāḷōkam Jīyar, the commentator of Upadēśaratnamāla, has pointed out that this is a counterpart of the original hymns of Āḷvār and though there are four other commentaries for Tiruvāymoḷi, one can enjoy the word by word explanation only in Jīyar's commentary.³ Such is the greatness of Pannīrāyirappaḷi.

When we look into the introduction of the commentary, Jīyar has begun with a Maṅgaḷa Ślōka with a view to worshipping Nammāḷvār and has revealed his desire to present the commentary as he heard from his Ācāryas⁴.

In Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya, the Guruparampara of Ācāryas is classified thus:

- I. From Śrīman Nārāyaṇa to His Consort and down to Maṇavāḷa Māmunigaḷ.
- II. From Śrī Rāmānuja to the 74 Simahāsanādīpatīs.
- III. Grandha Vyākhyātās from Śrī Rāmānuja to Maṇavāḷa Māmunigaḷ.

In the Grandha Guruparampara, there are three sub paramparas covering Rahasya Grandhas, Divya Prabandha and Śrī Bhāṣya. Under Divya Prabandha parampara, Vādikēśari Aḷagly Maṇavāḷa Jīyar finds a due place.⁵

Vādikēśari Aḷagly Maṇavāḷa Jīyar was born in Brahmadēśam Mannār Koll situated in the Pandya State of South India. His original name was Varadarāja. According to Yatīndrapraṇava Prabhāvam, his star is Makha and according to Periya Tirumudl Adalvu, he was born in the Tamil month Āni with Śvāti star.⁶ According to Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sudarśanam Souvenir 1984, Jīyar was born in 1242 A.D. and attained mōkṣa in 1350 A.D. He lived 108 years.

Jīyar's life is a unique one. He was serving as a cook in his Ācārya Pēriyavāccān Pillai's house. One day, some scholars known to his Ācārya, came

there and were reading some books in the house. Since the Ācārya was not in the house, Jīyar enquired what they were reading. Having known Jīyar's illiteracy, they sarcastically said, 'Musalakīśalayam' (a pestle, which cannot bring forth tender leaves). Not knowing its meaning Jīyar informed his Ācārya on his arrival. The Ācārya told him that they had sardonically talked about him as he was an illiterate. Immediately, Jīyar knelt down before his Ācārya and begged him to shower his blessings to enable him to become a scholar. The Ācārya taught him everything beginning with Akṣarābhyāsam, Kāvya, Nāṭaka, Alankāra, Tarka, Mīmāṃsa and other Sāstrās and made him write a Kāvya entitled Musalakīśalayam, which word had been used to scoff at him. Later he became a saint, debated with others and thus won the title 'Vādikēśari'. He has written several books out of which nine are on maṇḍipravāḷa style. Among his writings, Pannīrāyirappaḍi is the one which probably must have been written after 1274 A.D as he began his spiritual education at the age of 32.

The structure of the commentary:

In the preface Jīyar calls Tiruvāymoḡi as the essence of the Vēdās and defines its greatness in a

fitting manner. This Prabandham, he says, exemplifies the five fold knowledge (Arthapancaka). This is stated in the following Ślōka:

śrīpatih cētanasya hētutvēna samāsritah |
anīṣṭahānim iṣṭaprāptinca kurutē svayam ||

The five fold basic knowledge items are 1. the nature of God, 2. the nature of soul, 3. The means of emancipation, 4. The obstacles in the way of emancipation and 5. the Puruṣārtha or the final goal itself.

These are expanded in the 10 centums of Tiruvāymoḻi. The first four centums (உயர்வற, வாயும் திரை, முடிச்சோதி, ஒரு நாயகம்), elaborate the nature of jīva and Īsvara. The third two centums (கையார் சக்கரம், வைகல் பூங்கழிவாய்) mention the means of emancipation. The fourth two centums (உண்ணிலாவிய, தேவிமார் ஆவார்) analyse the nature of the obstacles. The last and fifth two centums (கொண்ட பெண்டிர், தாளதாமரை) elaborate the nature of or final goal. In other words, the actuality (tatva) of the everlasting God and the actuality of jīva are known from the first four centums. The last four centums discuss the obstacles to emancipation and the actuality of final goal or Puruṣārtha. The middle two centums speak about the nature of the means of emancipation which is

God Himself and on whose grace alone the Jīva depends.

Enumerating the qualities of God in this commentary, Jīyar says that the first centum (உயர்வற) speaks of God as the All protector and that the second (வாயும் திரை) mentions the enjoyable nature of God. The third centum (முடிச்சோதி) speaks of the soul's experience with God. The fourth (ஒரு நாயகம்) says that this alone can bring the pleasure. God as a means of emancipation is well explained in the fifth centum (கையார் சக்கரம்). The sixth centum (வைகல் பூங்கழிவாய்) gives how the soul approaches Him as the only means of emancipation. The seventh centum (உண்ணிலாவிய) enumerates the result of the accumulation of sins and the eighth centum (தேவிமார் ஆவார்) speaks how the soul can free itself from them. The ninth centum (கொண்ட பெண்டிர்) mentions the nature of Puruṣārtha or goal and the last centum (தாளதாமரை) speaks of the attainment of Puruṣārtha and the happy communion with God.

The special features of this commentary are: The gist of each centum or decad is given at the beginning as introduction to the ideas. The paraphrase of each hymn is given with lucid explanation, as also the meanings of special words

the relevant grammar points and the follow up of ideas in the other commentaries, variation in the text, if any, and its significance.

The literary excellence:

The literary excellence of the commentary, as a whole, can be seen in the ideas of each centum and the expansion in the decads and the unbroken connection between the 1102 verses from the first to the last. While explaining the connection of each decad with the next, Jīyar has followed some fundamental principles. They are: 1. The order according to Śrī Vaiṣṇava Philosophy, 2. the five fold basic knowledge, 3. direct connection between the verses, 4. linking the word with sentences, 5. Āzvār's addressing God and 6. Āzvār's intuitive devotion. While analysing each decad, Jīyar grasps to perfection the experiences of the Āzvār and explains them in choice language. In most places the correct meaning cannot be given without understanding the fundamental principle of Samānādikāraṇya. Scholars define Samānādikāraṇya as follows:

bhinnapravṛtti nimittānām śabdānām ।
ēkasmin ātirukṭi sāmānādikāraṇyam ॥

This is mainly of the following types: 1. Śarīra-Ātma Bhāva, 2. Nirvāha Nirvāhya Bhāva, 3. Janya Janaka Bhāva, 4. Guṇa Guṇi Bhāva, 5. Upamāna Upamēya Bhāva, 6. Viśeṣaṇa Viśeṣya Bhāva and 7. Kārya Kāraṇa Bhāva. The commentary presents a clear explanation using this Nyāya.

Further, while introducing each hymn, Jīyar mentions Āzvār's inner thoughts. This is done mainly in four ways: 1. The entire gist of the hymn is given very briefly. 2. Importance is given to God's nature, unique personality and rare qualities. 3. Mention of the collective idea of each stanza, taking in all the four lines. 4. The apostrophe - addressing the Almighty.

The meanings of the verses are an expansion of the introduction. While explaining some words, Jīyar gives their root meaning. For example, பரஞ்சுடரை, நாரணனை, கேசவனை as giving the relation between Paramātmā and Jīvātmā, the love Nārāyaṇa shows to His devotees, and how He does away with the enemies of His devotees. Kēśava is taken to mean Kṛṣṇa as having killed Kēsi.

Āzvār's inner feelings are genuinely and exquisitely brought out in the explanation of the verses - his unlimited love as the Nayaki, his cravings, his endless sorrow in separation, extreme joy while

visualising the hero in the mind's eye, his aspiration, his hope and his steady belief that he won't be forsaken. Tamil commentators generally give a short verse, the gist of the poem after the verses are explained. This has been done by Jīyar by means of slokas. Jīyar classifies Āṣvār's state of mind as follows: 1. Expression of love and devotion, 2. Advising people as a result of his experience, 3. Addressing God declaring the nature of his love as a Nayaki. There are many cases where Jīyar clarifies doubts regarding some words and feelings. In several places Jīyar gives more than one meaning for a word as appropriate to the context, the first preference and mentions the other explanations as given by the Ācāryas. He associates the root meaning of words with the explanation. Authors of Tamil classics have used similes and metaphors to enable comprehension easier. Jīyar is no exception to this and his choice of words is a feast to the mind. When thrown into ecstasy, Āṣvār addresses the Lord using a chain of epithets. Jīyar explains the key word supplementing the idea with the rest. In the decad relating to Lord Śrīnivasa, Āṣvār heaps up epithets while announcing his surrender - Saranagati.⁷ The significance of the words in the first three line is

brought out by a set of questions addressed to the Lord. This method helps to enlighten the rare qualities of the Lord. In word explanation, the details taken for granted by other commentators, are explained here faithfully considering the significance of the root word. For இமையோர்கள் gives the meaning 'nityasurils' who enjoy everlasting bliss with unerring knowledge. For வெண்சங்கு, he gives the meaning 'the conch beautiful because of its rare whiteness'.

Religious contents:

As mentioned earlier, Jīyar's commentary contains an explanation of the Artha Panchaka - the five fold basic knowledge and two centums are devoted to each idea. At the end, Jīyar shows pertinently that Tiruvāymozi is an elaboration of Tirumantra - the first four centums giving the idea of அ, உ and ம, the next four centums giving the meanings of நம: and the following two centums, the meaning of நாராயணாய.

The last centum is an extension of the idea in the first. Two important things are mentioned about the nature of God. His protecting tendency and how He enjoys making Himself enjoyable to His devotees.

Among the Avatārās of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, Trivikrama, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Narasimha have captivated the mind of Āṇḍvār in his Tiruvāymozl. Jīyar's commentary explains how Nārāyaṇa has endeared Himself by means of these avatārās. He explains that Nārāyaṇa has blessed the world by placing His foot above the heads of all, which naturally cannot be easily achieved. He enjoys himself by giving a description of Vāmana, his impartial nature, in particular, in making no distinction between the high and the low.

Āṇḍvār is said to be an impersonation of Kṛṣṇa bhakti - kṛṣṇa tṛṣṇā tatvam - (thirst for enjoyment with Kṛṣṇa). In the line உறியமர் வெண்ணெய் உண்டவன் கோயில், Jīyar combines the situation of Kṛṣṇa stealing butter with the consequent situation - being bound to the wooden mortar and weeping unconsolably. Being terribly afraid of Yaśōda, Kṛṣṇa could not even weep aloud - a very strange experience that has captivated the mind of Āṇḍvār and as a result the mind of the commentators. Āṇḍvār forgot himself in thought of this quality and was in a trance for a period of six months^a

The qualities of Śrī Rāma as experienced by Āṇḍvār and the commentators are his exceptional love to his devotees and his desire to free them

completely from their enemies. While explaining the word காகுத்தன் Jīyar says that Sri Rama's rare beauty and qualities attracted the Rsis and more so his simplicity and saulabhyam, i.e. easy accessibility."

In the case of Narasimhavatāra, Jīyar enumerates the attributes of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa, the grand appearance, though half man and half lion. While explaining the word "Nārāyaṇa" Jīyar mentions the meanings as derived from the root words nāram and ayanam. Likewise the words Gōvinda, Kēśava and Dāmōdara are explained with reference to His līlās.

Śrī Vaiṣṇavism is based on Rahasya Traya - Tirumantram, Dvayam and Carama Ślōka. These are well explained in TiruvāymoḶi. In Jīyar's commentary, the meanings of Tirumantra are referred to in five places,¹⁰ the meanings of Dvaya in two places,¹¹ and Carama Ślōka is quoted in seven places.¹²

Jīyar's erudition in Grammar:

Jīyar mentions important grammar points wherever necessary and given after each decad, the nature of the metre. His explanation of ĀḶvār's Nāyaki Bhāva is fully in accordance with Tamil agapporul thural. He must have had at the tip of his

fingers all the rules of grammar and agapporul. A deep study of the commentary reveals that Jīyar has understood Āzvār's feelings and has gone a step further. While explaining the situation for example, in the first centum, 3rd decad, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa reveals Himself as Trivikrama and disappears. Āzvār's thirst for communion deepens and he becomes a Nāyaki. Being unable to bear the separation, she sends message through birds like the crane, stork, etc.¹³ This manner of passion is mentioned as Kaikkilāi (one sided love) as mentioned in Panniru Pāṭṭiyal, Tolkāppiyam etc.

Jīyar's great intellectuality and the speciality of the commentary:

Maṇavāḷa Māmunigaḷ aptly refers the exceptional intellectuality of Jīyar as பெரிய போதம். Jīyar's natural wisdom, high education and erudition inherited from Ācāryas have enabled him to present this gem of a commentary. The features are:

1. Jīyar's erudition in both languages.
2. his method of approach in the commentary
3. the influence on him of the works of earlier Ācāryas.
4. an outline of the verses in each decad given as introduction.
5. following the earlier Ācāryas' commentaries without mentioning their names,
6. exposition of

quotations, 7. showing Āzvār's experience in the introduction, 8. exposition of rare words with meanings, 9. synopsis after each decad, 10. giving a special explanation for attribute phrases and 11. Jīyar's commentary as mentioned in Arumpadaural of Bhagavat Viṣayam.

In several places he has followed the earlier Ācāryas' sayings, though here and there he mentions his own version. For example, in the fifth decad of the fourth centum, the word ஆளும் In the first hymn is explained: 'living within and ordaining'.¹⁴ This is what Nampillai has done in Idu.¹⁵ In certain places, Nampillai gives two or three meanings and Jīyar has followed only the second meaning. For example, in the 8th centum, 9th decad and fourth hymn, Āzvār describes the Kuṭṭanāṭṭu Tiruppuliyūr Divya Dēśa. Here Nampillai gives two meanings for the word ஊர்வளங்கிளர் சோலை.¹⁶ Jīyar follows the second meaning by mentioning the fertility of the Divya Dēśa with extensive groves.

Jīyar has closely followed the explanation given by the earlier Ācāryas, but did not mention the source. By studying other four commentaries, we find explanatory references in Jīyar's commentary to Rāmānuja in 17 places, Bhaṭṭar in 18 places, and Tirumālaiyāṇḍān, Nanciṻyar, Ēmbār, Pillāṇ,

Kūrattālvān, Mudaliyāṇḍān, Uyndapillai, Cōṭṭainambi Cītrāṭkōṇḍān, Pillai Tirunaraiyūraiyaṉ, Vaṅgipurattatu Nambi and Pillai Amudanār. For example, in the 9th decad of the 9th centum, there are two versions for the first hymn by Tirumālaiyāṇḍān and Rāmānuja in Nampillai Idu.¹⁷ Jīyar prefers the explanation of the latter.¹⁸ Jīyar has quoted from 28 Sanskrit works in 285 places - the quotations in 198 places are not found in other commentaries.

To understand the commentaries easily, there are two glossaries called அரும்பதவுரை - one by Āttāṇ Jīyaṉ, popular as Aḍaiyavaḷaintāṇ glossary and the other by Kuṇakarampākkam Rāmānuja Jīyaṉ - called Jīyaṉ's glossary. These commentaries mention references of Jīyaṉ's Pannīrāyirappaḍi.

From the commentary we have an idea of common experiences of men in those days. For example, milk used as a drink, was considered a medicine as well.¹⁹ Some leaves were used in the place of the flute.²⁰ Bamboo was cut into a cup to store up milk.²¹ Cowherds threw their staff to recall the cows back.²² They had whistles and flutes also to give signals.²³

The uniqueness of the commentary is that it gives as a connected chain, the one thousand chosen quality of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa as contained in

Tiruvāymoḷi and the word structures in Tamil and Sanskrit are in evidence of Jīyar's great scholarship.

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1. *Tamil Pulavar Agaravarṇai Akaradhi* p.49.
2. *aṇpōṭu azakiya maṇavāḷaccīyar*
piṇpōrum karraṇintu pēcukaikkāt tamperiya
pōtamuṭaṇ māraṇ maraiyiṇporuḷuraittatu
ētamil paṇṇīrāyiram. (upatēsarataṇamālai 39)
3. *ibid. Pillai Lokam Jīyar commentary.*
4. *abhivandya śaṭhāryāyamācāryādratamāgatam |*
dramiḍōpaniṣadbhāṣyaṃ darśaiṣyē yathāśrutam ||
5. *Pazhanadal Vilakkam* p.65.
6. *Yathindrapranava Prabhavam* p. 18-20.
7. *Tiruvāymoḷi* 6.10.10
8. *ibid.* 1.3.1. *Idu.*
9. *ibid.* 7.2.3. *12 Padī.*
10. *ibid.* 1.1.1., 2.9.4., 9.4.9., 10.4.9., 10.5.1.
11. *ibid.* 6.10.10., 10.5.7.
12. *ibid.* 6.10.9., 4.9.1., 6.7.1.
13. *Tiruvāymoḷi* 1.3. *12 Padī.*
14. *ibid.* 5.4.1 *12 Padī.*
15. *ibid.* 36 *Padī.*
16. *ibid.* 8.9.4. *12 Padī and 36 Padī.*
17. *ibid.* 9.9.1. *36 Padī.*
18. *ibid.* *12 Padī.*
19. *ibid.* 1.7.3 *12 Padī.*
20. *ibid.* 9.9.2. *12 Padī.*
21. *ibid.* 4.8.4 *12 Padī.* 22. *ibid.* 23. *ibid.* 6.4.2.,

PRATIVĀDI BHAYAṆAKARAM AṆṆA - A STAUNCH LEADER OF ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVISM

The world's most ancient and the richest temple of Lord Vēṇakaṭēśvara at Tirumala begins the day with the recitation of Śrī Vēṇakaṭēśa Suprabhātam in the wee hours of the morning. However, few know about the life and period of its composer, Śrī Prativādi Bhayaṇakaram Aṇṇa. He was not only a great composer of several devotional poems, but also a renowned dialectician who refuted the validity of several schools. His life and works are ever inspiring the people throughout the length and breadth of India.

In the 14th century many Ācāryās contributed much to the growth of Śrī Vaiṣṇavism. Among them, in the year 1361, in the Tamil month Āḍi, in the ascendancy of Puṣya Star and when other planets in exalted position, a child prodigy was born to a pious couple Anantācārya and Āṇḍāl in Kāñcīpuram. They were the descendents of Muḍumbhī Nambhī, one of the 74 Simhāsanādhīpatis nominated by Śrī Rāmānuja. Anantācārya named his son 'Attigiriṇādarāṇṇar'. His radiant face foretold everyone of his bright future. Born with prodigious and precocious talent combined with divinity, Aṇṇā mastered all

traditional sāstrās at the holy feet of his Ācārya Nayāna Varaḍācārya, son of Śrī Vēdānta Deṇḷḷa. Having married at the right time, he was serving Lord Varadārāja of Kānci, by bringing water from nearby well called Sālaikkīṇaru, to perform daily rituals.

At that time, Narasimha Miśra, a Māyāvādi, came from the North to conquer Ācārya Nayāna Varaḍācārya with a cart load of books. But the Ācārya was so confident of Anṇa and sent him to debate with Miśra. Anṇa received the blessings of his Ācārya for his victory over Narasimha Miśra, who later on became Anṇa's disciple. Then the Ācārya conferred on Anṇa the title Prativādi Bhayaṇakarar and he received customary honours in the temple.

Next to Ācārya Nayāna Varaḍācārya, Anṇa became the foremost preceptor to propagate Śrī Bhāṣya throughout the country. It was during this period, Vīra Narasimha Rāya, who ruled the Vijayanagar empire came down to Kāñcīpuram and paid his obeisance to Anṇa and became his disciple. He presented precious jewels, a palanquin and many other things as a mark of respect to his Ācārya.

One day Anṇa happened to hear Nammāzvār's hymns on Lord Śrīnivāsa in Tiruvāymoḡi. Afterwards

he visited Tirumala. While worshipping Lord Śrīnivāsa with intense bhakti, another Ācārya Tholappar gave him a pot to bring water for the Lord from Ākāśagaṅga. By his benign order, Aṇṇā used to bring water every day for the Lord from Ākāśagaṅga. At one time, while bringing water, he happened to hear about Ācārya Varavaramuni, otherwise known as Periya Jīyar of Śrīraṅgaṁ, from his disciples who visited Tirumala. Aṇṇā who was absorbed in the moving tales of Periya Jīyar's devotional services, caused delay in bringing water to the Lord. The Arcaka ran upto Aṇṇā and pulled the water pot from him and performed puja to the Lord in time. Aṇṇā felt that he had to part with the water before scenting it with spices. Since then Aṇṇā had an intense desire to meet Varavaramuni. After a considerable journey, he reached Śrīraṅgaṁ and visited the temple where Varavaramuni was engaged in discoursing on Tiruvāymoḡi. Aṇṇā prostrated before him and rejoiced at his spiritual splendour. Varavaramuni suspended the discourse and had conversation with him. When suspended the discourse, Aṇṇā said Jīyar that he was Bhayaṅkara (fearsome) only to the crowd of opponents of our faith but a servant for the true Śrīvaiṣṇava. Periya Jīyar praised him and

said that he and his descendents will bear the Dāśyanāma of Śrīvaṣṇavādāsa. Then Jīyar continued the exposition on Tiruvāymozi. Anṇa became the right hand unto the Jīyar and also one of the important Ācāryās among Aṣṭadīggajās of Jīyar. It is said that Jīyar did Pañcasamskāra to Anṇa and his family.

After some time Periya Jīyar decided to worship the Lord at Tirumala and so he started with Anṇa and other disciples. On their way, they first visited Kāncīpuram and Ṣōllīngūr and then reached Tirumala. While worshipping the Lord in Viśvarūpa Darśana at Tirumala, Jīyar heard the sweet hymns of Tōṇḍaraḍippōḍi Āṇvār's Tiruppalliyēvuuccl. He felt the absence of Suprabhātam and maṅgaḷāsāsanam (prayer for Lord's welfare). Immediately he asked Anṇa to compose verses in sanskrit. At the instance of Jīyar, Anna composed Suprabhātam, Stōtram, Prapatti, and Maṅgaḷāsāsanam all addressed to Lord Śrīnivāsa. Jīyar heard these nectarine verses in rapt attention and directed that these verses should be recited daily at the time of Tiruppalliyēvuuccl. Since then, these sonorous verses were enchantingly recited every day in the temple quite early in the morning.

It is said that In the Suprabhātam the first Ślōka is taken from Śrī Rāmāyana. There is no reference for the second Ślōka. The 9th, 10th and 13th Ślōkās are from the Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa. 11th and 12th Ślōkās also might be from other Purāṇās. In the Maṅgaḷam, the first Ślōka is from a Purāṇā, some say it is composed by Varavaramuni himself. The last Ślōkā is composed by Māmunigaḷ. Since these Ślōkās had added luster to the Stōstras, Aṇṇā included them.

At the Instance of Māmunigaḷ, he also composed Suprabhātam for 108 Śrīvaiṣṇava shrines. His other works are: Śrī Kṛṣṇā Maṅgaḷam, Śrīrangaraja Suprabhātam, Śrī Rāmānujā Suprabhātam, Varavaramuni Suprabhātam, Śrī Varavaramuni Śatakam, Śrī Bhāṣyakāra Maṅgaḷam, Commentary for Aṣṭaślōki of Śrī Parāśara Bhaṭṭar, a brief note on Śrī Bhāṣya, Śrī Bhāgavatam, Subhāḷōpaniṣad, Pādādikēśamāla in praise of Varavaramuni, Vāḷi Tirunāmam on Varavaramuni and so on. Among these, Aṣṭaślōki commentary is in simple Sanskrit combined with profundity and spiritual fervour. Kṛṣṇā Maṅgaḷam eulogises Lord Kṛṣṇā's deeds. It contains Ślōka about the Arcāmūrti of Tiruvindaḷūr in Tamil Nadu. Although he was an erudite scholar in Nyāya, Vyākaraṇa, Mīmāṃsa, and Vēdānta, his

Ācārya Bhakti and proficiency in Alankāra Śāstra is revealed in his work Varavaramuni Śatakam, his magnum opus. Pādādikēśamāla on Varavaramuni shows his scholarship in Drāviḍa Bhāṣa and bhakti on his Ācārya.

After the demise of Varavaramuni, he left Śrīraṅgaṃ and lived in Melkote, Kanchi and Tirumala. He lived for 93 years and attained Mōkṣa in 1464. He had three sons viz Śrīnivasacharya, Anantācārya and Aḷagiyamaṇavāḷappērumāḷ who were all well versed in Śrīvaiṣṇava Sampradāya.

Through his immortal works like "Suprabhātam" he continues to live in the hearts of devotees of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa even today.

अज्ञानिना मया दोषानशेषान् विहितान् हरे।
क्षमस्व त्वं क्षमस्व त्वं शेषशैलशिखामणे॥

Āzvār Emperumānār Jīyar Tiruvaḍigaḷē Śaraṇam

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Dr. M. Varadarajan's "STUDIES IN ŚRĪ VAIṢṆAVA LITERATURE " is now offered to encompass the vast literature of Alvars' hymns. It is meticulously worked out with diacritical marks to facilitate ease in reading. The author, being traditional, assiduously studied ancient texts of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Literature under traditional scholar Acharya Sri U.Ve.T.A.Krishnamacharya Swami of Tirupati for over two decades. He has nearly 100 articles to his credit in English and Tamil published in leading journals and newspapers. Besides, he delivered nearly 50 lectures on Śrī Vaiṣṇava Literature. He was instrumental in propagating Alvars' hymns in South India as a founder Special officer of Alvar Divya Prabandha Project, T.T.Devasthanams, Tirupati, by organising discourses and a National Seminar on Nalayira Divya Prabandham. In recognition of his research and academic credits, he was awarded Meritorious Teacher in Sri Venkateswara University in 2000. At present, he is working as Associate Professor in Tamil, S.V.University, Tirupati. His other publications are: Panneerayirappadi - A study; Vainava Vilakku; Śrī Vaiṣṇava Sampradaya in Tirumala; Vainava Vazhi Thondral Varalaru; The Voice of Alvars and Acharyas (English & Tamil); Divya Prabandha Lexicon (14000 words); Upanishadic Thoughts in Tiruvoymozhi; and A Profile of Śrī Vaiṣṇava Acharyas.